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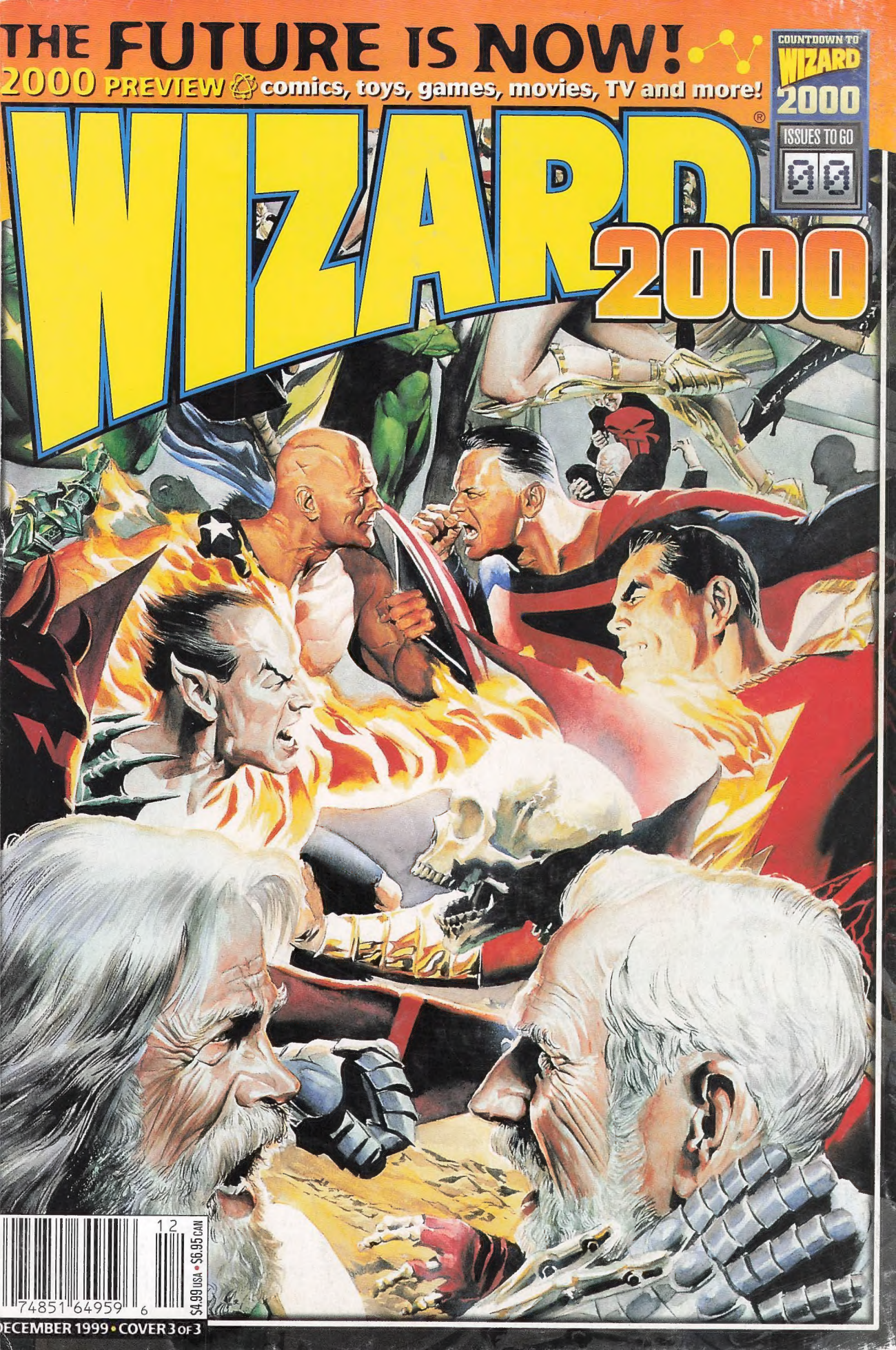

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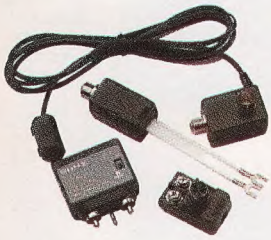

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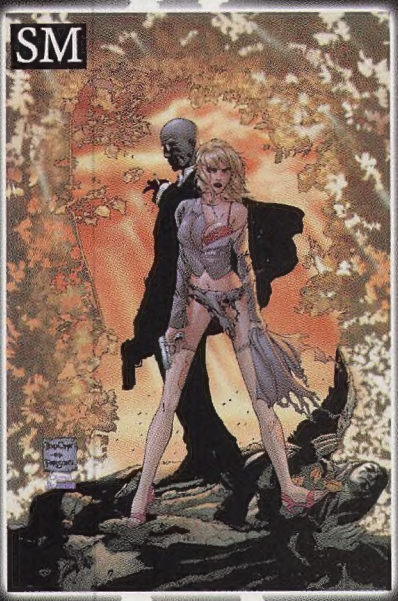

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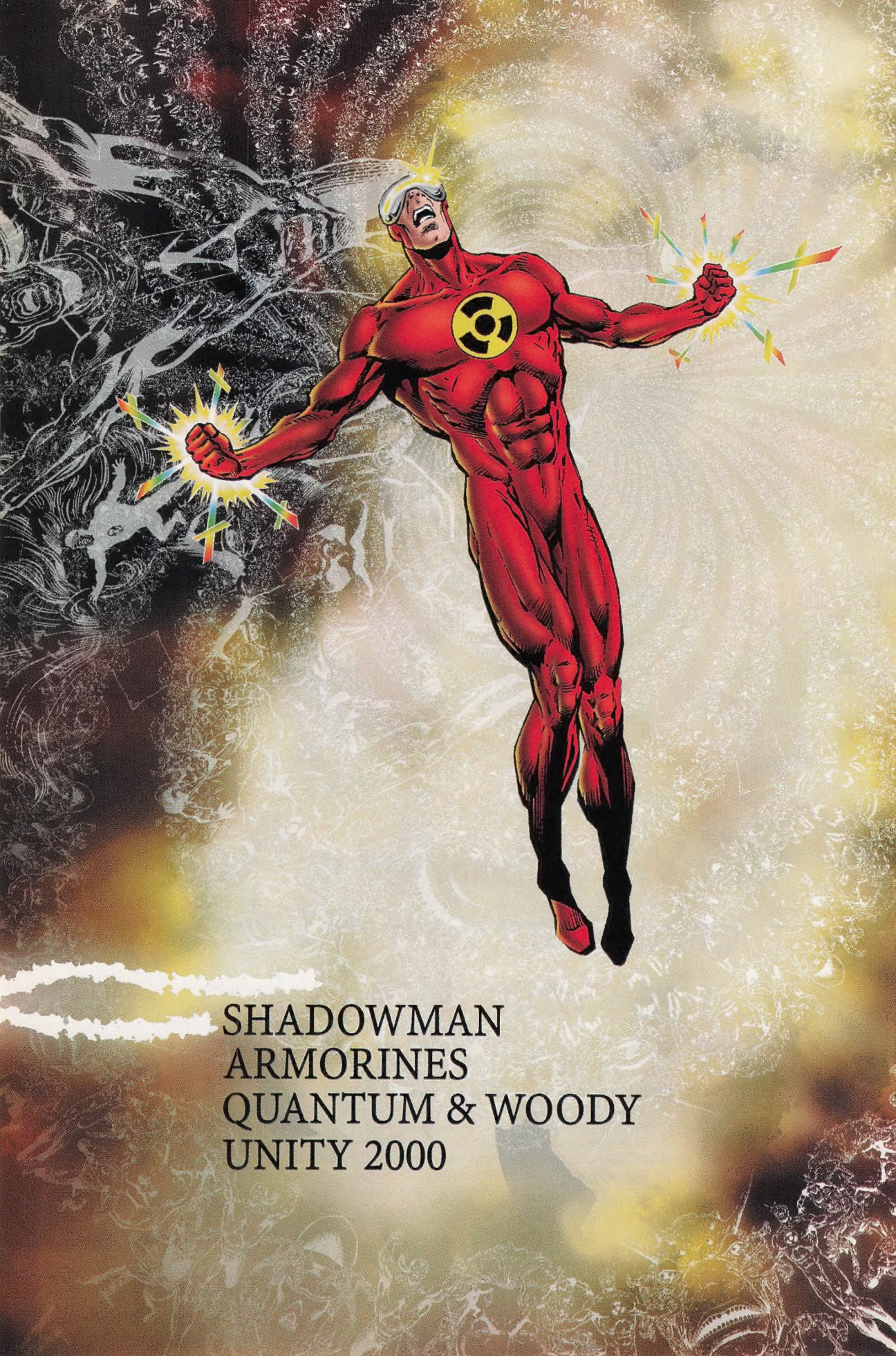
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WIZARD contents

THE COMICS MAGAZINE • NUMBER 2000 • DECEMBER 1999

OVER HERE, JABRONI!

Tying into our celebratory, year-long countdown to the new millennium, *Wizard* looks toward the future in each 1999 issue. Now, as the millennium smacks us in the face, *Wizard* #2000 takes an all-out assault on the future with in-depth coverage throughout our columns, departments and features. Heck, even the Price Guide gets in on the action. Welcome to the future. Don't say we didn't warn ya...

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Wizard gathers the industry's elite talents to debate the future of comics. **By Jim McLauchlin**

ON THE COVERS

The **future heroes** (left) were illustrated by Kevin Maguire and Al Gordon and colored by Liquid, while the **future heroes, manga style** (middle) were illustrated by Adam Warren and colored by Liquid. To see what the future holds for your favorite heroes, just check out...the whole magazine! **Kingdom Come vs. Earth X** was illustrated by Alex Ross. To find out how likely this dream project really is, check out our dream books feature on **page 70**.

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Holy journalistic integrity! Here's your shot at rubbing elbows with the big boys (or, well...us). One lucky stiff will win a shot at being a *Wizard* editor for a day!

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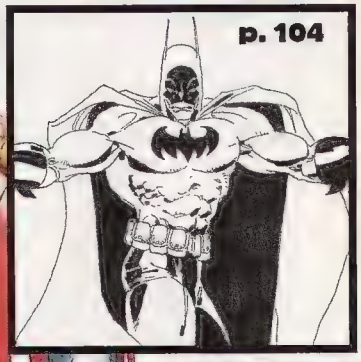

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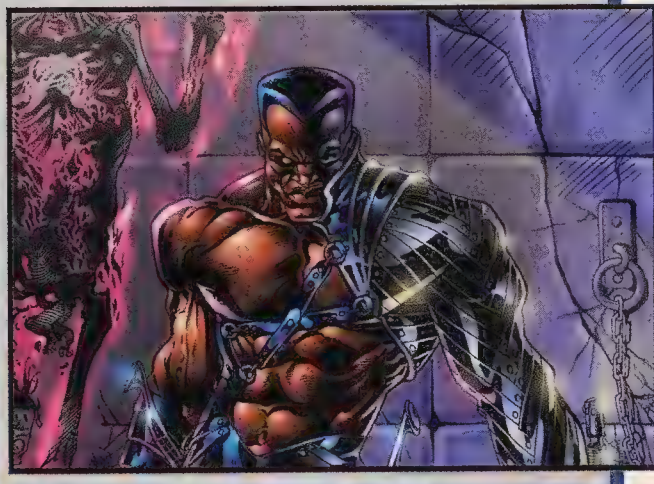
EXCLUSIVE OFFER

COOL STUFF THROUGH THE MAIL

BLADE #1/2

Bite this! Here's your only chance to get the exclusive *Blade* #1/2 comic featuring the ol' vampire hunter facing off against all-new villain the White Worm in a time-traveling tale by Bart Sears. Slice on over to **page 96** for more details.



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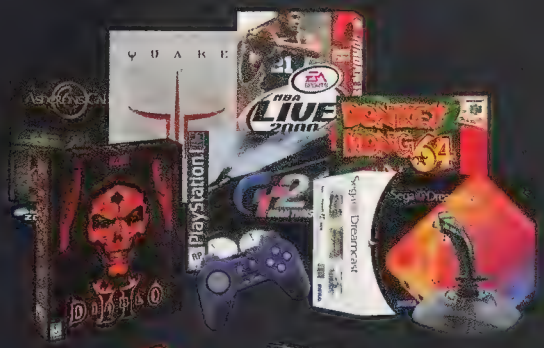

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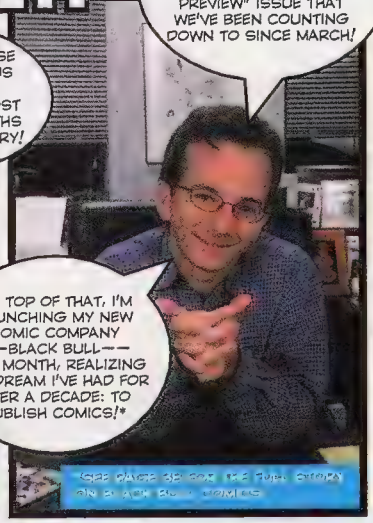

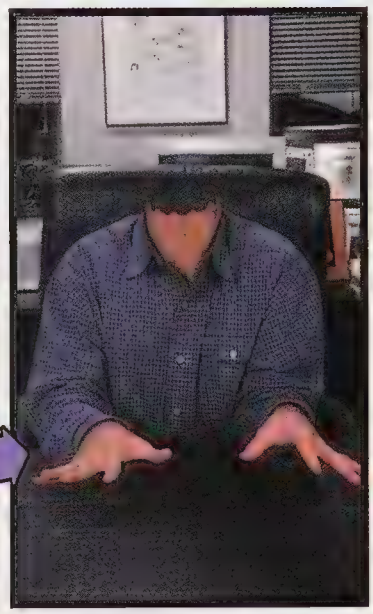

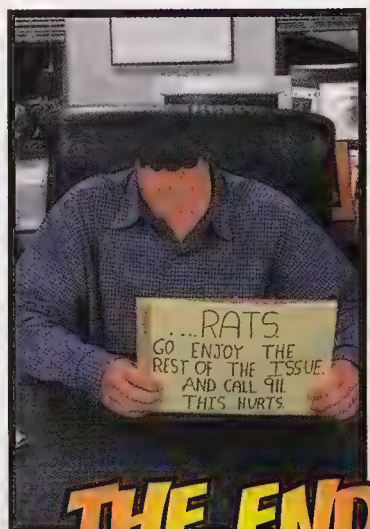

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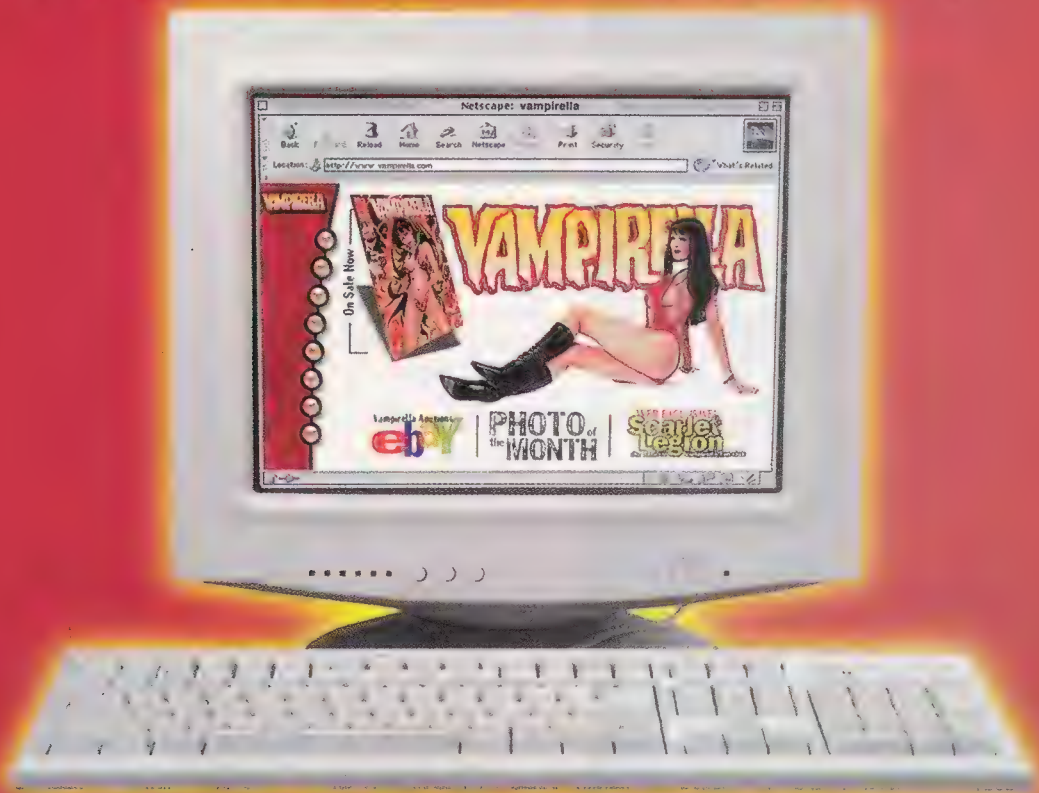

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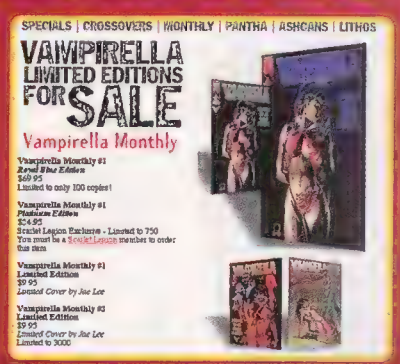

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MAGIC WORDS

HOT MODELING CHICKS!... WRESTLER ON PYM PARTICLES... ...AND LIQUOR & WILD WOMEN!

Well lookee here: *Wizard* #2000. Now let's see: If I started "Magic Words" with *Wizard* #32, that means I've been on this job for about 163 years now. Cal Ripken Jr.'s got nothin' on me!

Okay, so maybe it hasn't been that many consecutive issues. See, we've taken this occasion on the dawn of year 2000 to take a peek at what the future might hold in comics, calling this special love-fest you now hold in your grubby little mitts *Wizard* #2000. Which brings me to another point:

Yes, we know that the 21st century doesn't really start until 2001. But people like round numbers. That's why we've been using terms like "*Wizard* #2000" and "new millennium" in the same breath. It's not an oversight—it's a conscious choice. So all you annoying geeks who have pointed that li'l tidbit out in letters over the past several months can sleep easy knowing that we know when the millennium starts. And that you're all probably going to grow up to become math teachers.

In the meantime, your future is now. So relax and enjoy the issue.

Dear Jim-San,

I'm sure everyone is hopping the *Wizard* #2000 bandwagon by sending letters like this. And I'm not one to buck trends. So here are my choices for...

The Top 10 Comics of the 1990s!

10) *Transmetropolitan*. Warren Ellis wrote much good stuff at the end of the decade, and Transmet is the best. It evolved from raucous indictment of modern media to a truly incisive analysis of American politics.

9) *Daredevil: Man Without Fear*. Writer Frank Miller is practically synonymous with Daredevil, so it's no surprise his retelling and embellishing of DD's origin ruled. And John Romita Jr.'s art gave this book the sooty, urban feel it deserved.

8) *Akira*. Okay, half the series was published before 1990, but I'd feel guilty leaving it out. Katsuhiro Otomo's most renowned work is one of the best manga ever published in the U.S.

7) "Weapon X" from *Marvel Comics Presents* #72-#84. Barry Windsor-Smith's chronicle of Wolverine's origin was probably the best Wolvie story ever told.

6) *Sin City: Family Values*. All Frank Miller's Sin City books were excellent, but this self-contained graphic novel was head and shoulders above the rest.

5) *Kingdom Come*. It would be criminal to do a Top 10 list and not include Alex Ross. This was his best work of the decade. The riveting storyline of DC's heroes returning from isolation reminds us that there's a "human" in every "superhuman."

4) *Preacher*. Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon's ultraviolent dissection of the American mythos throws a cream pie in the face of every moral, religious, conservative sentiment in the world. But in the end, it's traditional values like standing by your own that drive the book.

3) *Foolkiller*. What? *Foolkiller*? This obscure Marvel mini-series from 1990-91 featured a low-budget Punisher with an over-developed social conscience. Still sounds crummy, I know—but try it! The entire 10-issue series can be had for, like, three bucks nowadays.

NO JOKE!

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BUNNY AWARD

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Jim takes his favorite letter and spotlights it here. There's no logic attached to this, nor is there a prize.

Jimbo,

I know that Star Trek fans are called "Trekkies." But what are Star Wars fans called? And don't say something smart-ass like "geeks" or something.

Kristian Yeager
lightsaber49@hotmail.com

Something smart-ass? Me? You wound me.

Anyhoo, didn't we go through this already? You like to call yourselves "Warsies." And if you're really clever, you also choose a bitchin' e-mail address like "lightsaber49" or something. Yeah! Now that's cool!

Ask and ye shall receive.

2) *From Hell.* Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell's painstakingly researched factual account of Jack the Ripper may have been the most ambitious work of the decade. Those who put forth the effort to read it will be richly rewarded by a deeply disturbing tale.

1) *Sandman.* A seamless blend of drama, fantasy, mythology, horror and just about any other genre you can name. Writer Neil Gaiman made the Endless—a race of all-knowing immortals—seem human. Truly one for the ages.

Mike Childress
McLean, VA

Not a bad list. I'd argue that a home could be made for *Sandman Mystery Theatre*, a stellar 1930s period-piece crime drama, and *Savage Dragon*, the best take-no-prisoners rippin' superhero funnybook yarn the world has ever seen. Aside from that, my comments on your list...

10) You're right. Warren Ellis has written a load of good stuff. So gimme Ellis' *Planetary* any day of the week. *Planetary* artist John Cassaday kicks all the ass on Earth, and *Transmetropolitan* just kind of...sits there from time to time without anything really happening.

9) *Man Without Fear* was okay, but it was just a retelling of a prior story. I will agree, however, that John Jr.'s art was amazing.

8) Never read *Akira*. But it is on my to-be-read list. I'll let you know.

7) "Weapon X" blows. Next!

6) You're right. All *Sin City* rocks bells. I'm partial to the original, simply titled *Sin City*.

5) *Kingdom Come* was good. But the Kurt Busiek-Alex Ross *Marvels* was better. Ain't nothin' like seeing Marvel's heroes larger than life from the man-on-the-street perspective of *Marvels*' Phil Sheldon. *Marvels* put the reader in a comic.

4) Agreed. *Preacher* is a modern comic masterpiece. The thing that blows my mind? How two guys from Europe can understand and nail America right on the head like Ennis and Dillon have.

3) Get off the pipe, son. That stuff'll rot your brain.

2) Never read *From Hell*. But now that Eddie Campbell Comics is collecting it in November (Yay!), it's definitely on my to-be-read list.

1) Agreed. 'Nuff said.

Dear Wizard,

I am a 21-year-old female who is an avid comic collector. I was wondering what it takes to become a model for a character. I'm interested in modeling, preferably in the comic arena. I've had offers for other modeling jobs, but they don't interest me.

Mary Villanueva
Beeville, TX

What? My offers of boudoir photography "don't interest" you?

Fine. Because no obstacle is too high for me to climb in the pursuit of truth and cleavage, I went straight to the den of Pantha (shown at right), sultry spokes-model for (duh) Harris Comics' *Pantha*. "You need personality to put yourself in a frame of mind where you are the character," purrs Pantha. Ya also need patience because Pantha says, "Fans can drive you crazy. Sometimes they just stare and never say anything. That can be unnerving. And they can be obsessive. I've been followed many times. The best thing to do is just be friendly and talk to people if they get weird."

So there ya go, Mary: personality and patience. And oh, yeah—a bunch of restraining orders.

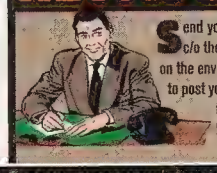
Dear Jim,

I was a big fan of the old Eclipse Comics characters. Now that Todd McFarlane Productions owns them, what is Todd and the gang planning for the ol' Eclipse guys?

Hazen J. Jette
hazen@teleport.com

SUNNY PHOTO AND PANTHA: PAUL SCHRADI

HEY! IT'S PEN PALS...



Send your name, address, age, sex and three favorite titles to Pen Pals, c/o the "Magic Words" address at the end of this column (put your age on the envelope). The only way to get your Internet address listed instead is to post your info in the Pen Pals board on America Online's "Wizard World" forum (keyword: Wizard; look in the Wizard Bulletin Board, under Message Boards). **Pre-'98 entrants:** Please resend your entries.

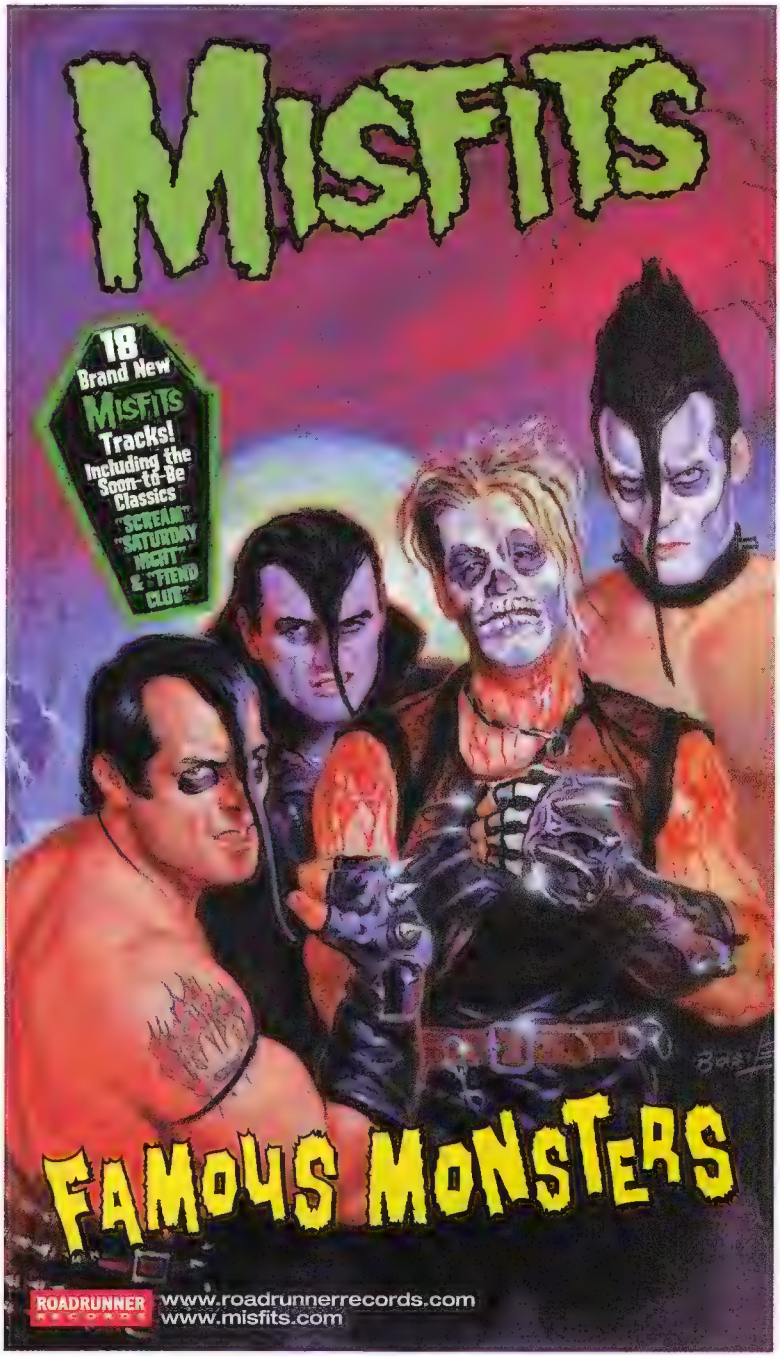
NO JOKE! *WITCHBLADE* WRITER CHRISTINA Z. IS ALSO AN ACCOMPLISHED MUSIC JOURNALIST, HAVING BEEN PUBLISHED IN *SPIN*, *URB* AND *ALTERNATIVE PRESS*.

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS...

Beau Smith, two-fisted executive director of publishing for TMP and former Eclipse sales kahuna, sez "Todd and I were talkin' about the Eclipse stuff just the other day while plannin' the ruin of our enemies. As you know, the Heap has already made his small comeback in the pages of *Spawn*. I'm comin' real close to havin' *The Black Terror* knockin' on your door in 2000. Looks like it'll be a painted series, with Simon Davis throwin' the brush strokes on it. He's noted for doin' some of our *Crow* covers, as well as a kick-ass series over in England called *Gun Lovin' Criminals*."

That's all well and good, but how 'bout the one Eclipse character everyone's asking about? "Miracleman is still in the thinkin' stage," Beau says. "We're hopin' the year 2000 will be the stage for his new debut."

And yes, Beau refuses to use the letter "g" at the end of any word.



Dear Jim Industries,

I love *Earth X*! As I put way too much thought into a comic book, it occurs to me that the new Daredevil in the "Earth X" future could be a lost, misguided Deadpool. The sense of humor, his attitude towards life, and the healing factor he seems to display all seem to point towards the fact that he's really Marvel's merc-with-a-mouth. Is he? And for that matter, what does *Earth X* creator Alex Ross think of the 'Poolman in general?

Brian Walker
Someguy365@aol.com

Hmmm. Good argument. Could the future Daredevil be the current Deadpool? Nah. "He's definitely not,"says Ross. "We may not even reveal just who this guy in the Daredevil suit is."

How can we be sure Alex is tellin' the truth? Your second question provides the answer. "Just to show you my absolute ignorance of certain areas of Marvel publishing," he says, "I didn't even know he had a healing factor. I've never read Deadpool. Ever."

Hey Alex—get on the stick. It's good stuff.

Dear Magical Words,

I was wondering if Marvel has any plans of bringing back the *Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe*? This was an interesting read. It was actually fun to read the encyclopedia!

Jason W. Weeks
clownking@prodigy.net

Marvel has plans, but those plans are on hold. Editor Tom Brevoort says, "While we've talked about doing an updated *Handbook* in the past—and, indeed,

JOE ROUNDTREE
Age: 17 Sex: Male
PO Box 147
Brownstown, WA 98920
Likes: *Spider-Girl*, *Hulk*, "The Simpsons"

VINCENT HOUANGVILAY
Age: 14 Sex: Male
2725 Gumdrop Drive
San Jose, CA 95148-2023
Likes: *Avengers*, any/all X-Men, JLA vs. Teen Titans

SEBASTIAN SCHERER
Age: 14 Sex: Male
Am Rehrkamp 8, 30952
Ronnenberg, 0 51 09 / 21 20
Germany
Likes: Pokémon, "South Park"

CAMERON D. NEIFERT
Age: 12 Sex: Male
P.O. Box 1352
Citrus Heights, CA 95611
Likes: *Ranma 1/2*, *Futabakun-Change*, *Fathom*

BRIAN JOHNSON
Age: 18 Sex: Male
13183 Lovett Road
Baton Rouge, LA 70818
Likes: anime & manga, *Avengers*

ROBB JAHNKE
Age: 32 Sex: Male
3357 E. Mallory Avenue
Cudahy, WI 53110
Likes: *Thor*, *Aquaman*, any Jack Kirby, Jim Starlin

KAMMIE FENWICK
Age: 19 Sex: Female
7336 N State Road 59
Brazil, IN 47834
Likes: *Fathom*, *Witchblade*, *Aria*, manga

had even finished work on about two-and-a-half issues of the thing—at the moment, the direct market doesn't seem strong enough to support such a project. After all, in a world where new series get canceled seven issues out, we don't want to have the *Handbook* end abruptly with 'L'. So a new *Handbook* will have to wait until the marketplace as a whole is in better shape."

Dear Wizard

In *Wizard* #97, it says on page 49 that pro wrestler Kevin Nash measures 6-foot-10. On page 56, it says that he's 7-foot-2. What's up with that?

Brian Lavallee
lavale@nbnet.nb.ca

High heels. All them rasslers are cross-dressers, y'know.

Dear Jim the Great,

I love Leinil Francis Yu's work on *Wolverine*! He's my favorite artist at Marvel, and I've been wondering:

1) How did he get started in the comic business?
2) What work, if any, did he do before *Wolverine*?
3) What music does he like listening to while drawing?
4) How long does he think he'll keep drawing *Wolverine*?
5) What other characters does he absolutely have to draw?

David DiPasquale
Maplewood, NJ

I also love Leinil Francis Yu's work on *Wolverine*! Wonder no longer:

1) "I first got hired by Whilce Portacio for his studio that was supposed to do some work for WildStorm," says Yu. "Nothing happened, but I did have the opportunity to learn from Whilce and hone my craft. A year later, he showed my stuff to Marvel, which earned me my *Wolverine* gig."

2) Yu did Entity Comics' *Aster: The Last Celestial Knight* # 3. "I also did some grunt work for *Iron Man* # 1 ('Heroes Reborn' version), but it was just backgrounds and stuff," he says.

3) Yu's five fave bands right now are Weezer, the Smashing Pumpkins, the Dave Matthews Band, Radiohead and the Lemonheads.

4) "I really don't know," says Yu. "Maybe another year or two."

5) Leinil wants to draw Batman! "And I have to have my *Uncanny X-Men* stint before I die, too," he says.

Dear Jimbo,

Pika pika pika pikachu! Chu chu chu chu pika chu chu pika pika. Pikachu chu pika chu pika pikachu. PIKACHU!

Pikachu
Bulbasaur's Secret Garden

I agree. Susan Lucci didn't deserve that Daytime Emmy award. That was sympathy voting at best.

Yo Jimbo,

Has former *Uncanny X-Men* writer Steven Seagle disappeared from comics?

Anthony Inverso
Drexel Hill, PA

Nope. Seagle is writing *Sleepy Hollow*, a Vertigo one-shot adapting the movie of the same name. Look for it in fine funnybook stores everywhere in November.

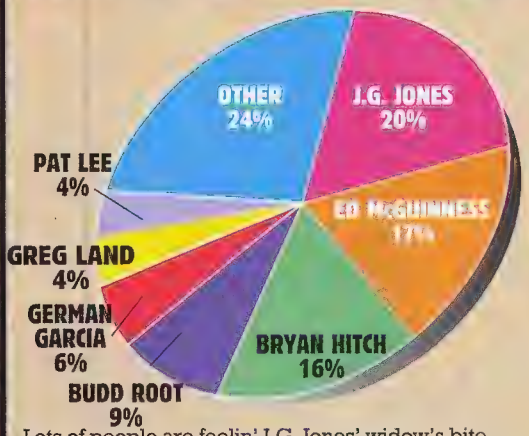
Hey Jim,

In response to the letter in *Wizard* #97 from Michael McCullough regarding the $100 cost of the *Crisis on Infinite Earths* hardcover, I would like to offer an alternative: Buy the

SURVEY SAYS

ONLINE QUESTION OF THE MONTH

WHO WILL BE THE SUPERSTAR ARTIST OF THE NEXT MILLENNIUM?



Lots of people are feelin' J.G. Jones' widow's bite.

Best known for his art on the Marvel Knights mini-series *Black Widow*, Jones won with with 20% of the vote, edging out Ed McGuinness (*Deadpool*, upcoming: *Superman*) and Bryan Hitch (*Authority*, upcoming: *JLA*).

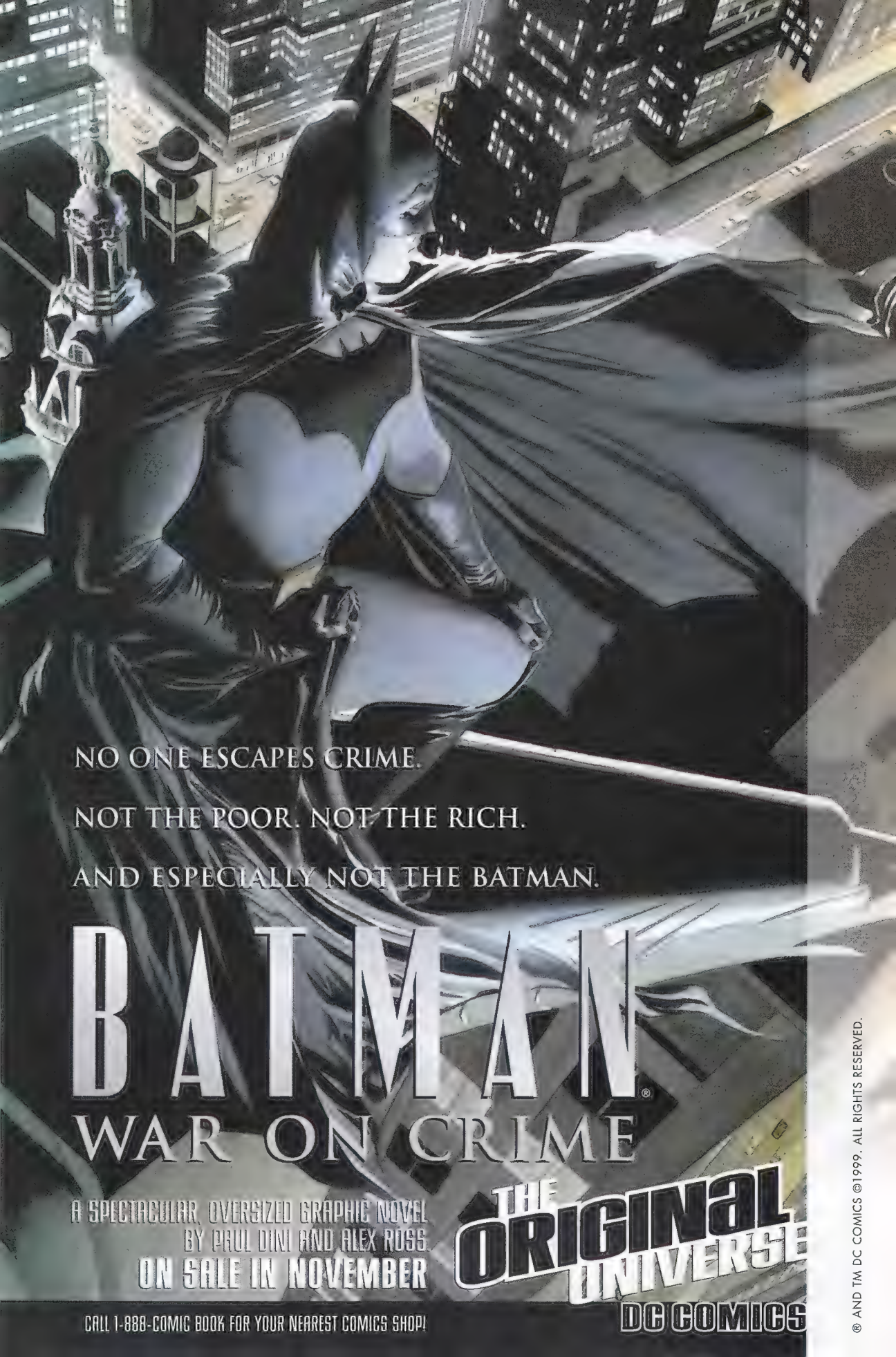
Behind Jones, lots of other artists got props. Travis Charest, John Cassaday, Jim Mahfood, Keron Grant and about 20 other people famous for putting pencil to paper all got touted as the next big thing by voters across the world. King of the write-in vote was Budd Root, artist of the black-and-white book *Cavewoman*. He pulled down 9% with a torrent of votes in the home stretch. ■ NACHIE CASTRO

KENNETH DIETERICH	JAMES MILLER	JAMES LISTER	JOSH HUTCHERSON	LEE MANGRUM	DANIEL CONCEPCION	STEVE NELSON
Age: 23 Sex: Male	Age: 18 Sex: Male	Age: 14 Sex: Male	Age: 14 Sex: Male	Age: 15 Sex: Male	Age: 11 Sex: Male	Age: 22 Sex: Male
P.O. Box 4732	P.O. Box 5257	1718 Est Hwy 287	P.O. Box 152	6364 Hwy. 4	11 Mahinhin St., U.P. Village	732 Pt. Brown Ave. NE #106
Vancouver, WA 98662	Phoenix, AZ 85010	Casa Grande, AZ 85222	Caldwell, AR 72322	Ringgold, CA 71068	Quezon City, Philippines 1101	Ocean Shores, WA 98569
Likes: all Spawn titles, *Blade*, *Buffy* comics	Likes: All X-Titles, *Batman*, *Spider-Man*	Likes: All anime/manga, *Cliffhanger*, *Deadpool*	Likes: *Spider-Man*, *Superman*, *Green Lantern*, *Gen 13*	Likes: *Pokémon*, *Arch Angels: The Saga*, X-titles	Likes: *Spawn: The Undead*, *Inhumans*, *Spawn Annual 1*	Likes: Buffy comics, manga, *Quicken Forbidden*

NO JOKE!

BLACK PANTHER WRITER CHRISTOPHER PRIEST WAS ONCE A MARVEL EDITOR NAMED JAMES OWSLEY. HE'S NEVER REVEALED WHY HE CHANGED HIS NAME...

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS...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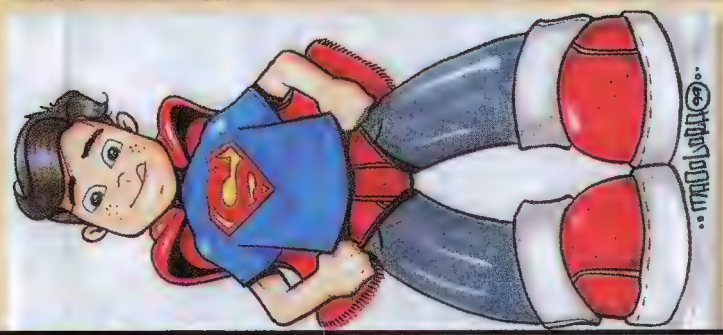
LETTER ART

Each fan who has his or her letter art printed this month wins a copy of this month's *Wizard* signed by the entire *Wizard* creative staff! Plus, the talented creator of this month's best envelope will win a cool Storm mini-bust signed by Randy Bowen from Bowen Designs. Man, Bowen Designs is so cool for donating such cool stuff, we love 'em more than our own mothers. Artists: Please include a clearly printed return address and a list of characters depicted on the back of the envelope. Americans: Send us all yer New Universe books! Canadians: Send Cubans!

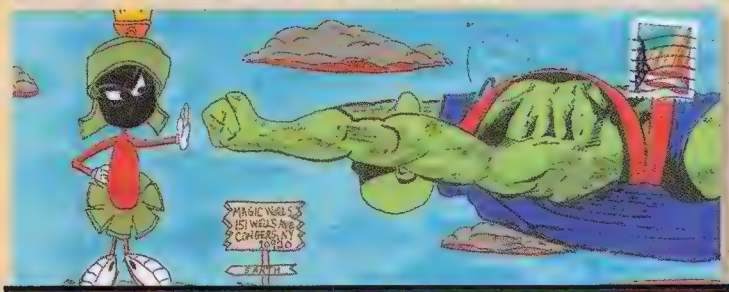
ENVELOPE OF THE MONTH.....THE PRIZE

GHOST RIDER Donny G. Kusuma, Surabaya, INDONESIA



SUPER KID Andy Modolora, Wahiawa, Hawaii

M-FORCE Alex Campbell, Chicago, IL



MARVIN THE MARTIAN vs MARTIAN MANHUNTER
Chris Montroy, Brunswick, ME

originals. I recently purchased the entire 12-issue series in Fine-to-Near Mint condition for a mere $20. Should you be lucky enough to find a buy like this, I then recommend you take the $80 you saved and blow it on liquor and wild women.

Or, DC's *JLA: Year One* trade paperback. It's excellent!

Steve Arnold
Pine Grove, PA

Wow. Someone who recommended liquor and wild women and it's not me for a change! See? This whole "house arrest" thing I'm under is a little severe. Can I come out now?

Dear Wizard,
My dad got me a kick-ass sword for my birthday. I dig it. I've already cut my index finger all the way to the bone screwing around with it. Sharp swords are cool.

Brian Vail
water19@earthlink.net

Please stay away from me. And don't write anymore, either.

Yep. By the time people are breakin' out the edged weapons, you know it's time to go. So enjoy the rest of the issue and remember that until next month, I remain...

–Jim McLauchlin

If Jim McLauchlin has told you once, he's told you a thousand times—Shut up!

Send letters to:
Magic Words
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920
or e-mail us at JMcLauch@aol.com

Please address all subscription concerns to:
Customer Service
c/o Wizard Entertainment Group
P.O. Box 656
Yorktown Heights, NY 10598

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Customer Service
c/o Wizard Entertainment Group
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920
(914) 268-3594
(Please include your full name, address and phone number and be as detailed as possible.)

NO JOKE!
"STAN LEE" IS A SHORTENED VERSION OF THE MARVEL FOUNDER'S GIVEN NAME. HIS REAL MONIKER'S STANLEY MARTIN LIEBER. HOW ABOUT THAT, TRUE BELIEVER?
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HE'S BAAAAACK!

Claremont returns to X-Men; new costumes, characters planned

Forget the "Year of the Dragon"— 2000 belongs to the X-Men.

With new costumes, characters, rosters and creative teams, Marvel's fully-loaded mutants boast the firepower they'll need to transform Y2K into Y2X.

Oh, yeah. Chris Claremont's coming back, too.

Claremont, who wrote the X-Men from 1975-1991, will resume his creative role on *X-Men* and *Uncanny X-Men* early next year. He penned some of the team's most legendary adventures, including *God Loves, Man Kills* and the "Dark Phoenix Saga" and gave birth to an entire generation of new characters, like Gambit and Rogue.

"When I left, I had a lot of things that were not tied up," Claremont said of his previous run on the books. "I had a long way to go before finishing the stories of these characters, and now, to my surprise, I have a chance to do that."

The famed scribe officially rejoins the X-team in March, just in time for *X-Men* #100 and *Uncanny X-Men* #380.

"We knew we wanted to do something big early next year to celebrate the new X-Men's 25th anniversary," X-editor Mark Powers said. "There are still a lot of people out there who want to see Chris do the two books.

"The movie's coming out [next summer] and it just really came together."

While Claremont's return marks the most spectacular event to hit the X-books in a long while, it will be impossible to ignore the other changes that will impact the X-titles next year.

On the creative front, Alan Davis departs as writer of both books and penciler on *X-Men*, replaced by *Wolverine* phenom Leinil F. Yu, who will join ongoing *Uncanny* artist Adam Kubert in assuming the responsibility for revamping and redesigning the X-Men.

In addition to the new look, Claremont's vision for Marvel's merry mutants may include a split squad for both X-Men books, similar to the blue and gold teams used throughout the early '90s. Powers said he believes a return to the separate teams would make things a lot easier for the readers.

"I think having the two books read almost as one on an ongoing basis gets really tough," he said. "It feels much bigger than it actually is."

In terms of the team's roster, the names of its future members haven't yet been cast in adamantium, mainly because current scribe Davis still has a few plot twists up his sleeve— one of which is rumored to involve the death of one of the X-Men.

Once Davis turns over the books, however, Claremont admits there's going to be a whole lotta shiftin' going on.

"There will be some different emphases," Claremont said. "I'll be bringing in some new characters, bringing back some old characters. You'll see some surprising changes."

Among those surprises,

SANTA CLAWS It'll be a Merry X-Mas as Jolly ol' Saint Chris returns.

NO JOKE! WOLVERINE IS CANADIAN BECAUSE FORMER MARVEL EDITOR-IN-CHIEF ROY THOMAS LOVES CHARACTERS WITH ACCENTS. THOMAS CHALLENGED WRITER LEN WEIN TO WRITE A CANADIAN ACCENT.

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS...

Powers hints, will be the departure of an X-Man, a new team leader and a new, fire-powered member who's still in development.

And while Claremont pledges to bring some cool new characters to the two titles, longtime X-fans shouldn't worry—Claremont staples like Psylocke, Gambit and Kitty Pryde will undoubtedly surface in the pages of Marvel's most popular books.

Among those who *won't* appear regularly during Claremont's return engagement are two of the X-Men's oldest—and arguably, most powerful—characters. Powers suggests both Professor Charles Xavier and Magneto will have diminished roles, if any, in the main X-titles.

"Chris has told me he wants to do new stuff his first year back on the book," Powers said. "He wants new villains."

In terms of his own upcoming storylines, Claremont carefully sidesteps any specific plans.

"If I tell you what I'm doing now, that gives away a lot of what Alan has planned for his issues and that's something we don't want to do," he said. "I have plans to deal with everything."

One such thing involves the inevitable question about the possibility of a reunion with John Byrne, the artist and co-plotter with whom Claremont created some of his most memorable X-Men tales.

"I would love to work with John again," Claremont said. "But I am just as interested and just as excited about finding the next generation of artists, of looking for new means of storytelling, new ways to reach the audiences I believe are out there.

"We can use the past as inspiration...but we're on the cusp of the 21st century. This is a new millennium, it's a new beginning for everything."

And he's not kidding. Among his first duties as X-Men writer, Claremont will have to deal with a significant change in the Marvel time stream.

"Between February and March for all the X-Men titles, six months will have passed," Powers said. "We hope that will give the creators the opportunity to introduce concepts that are radically different from what we've known the last few years.

"It gives you that sense of freshness and you wonder, 'how did all this happen?'"

While *X-Men* and *Uncanny X-Men* remain the focal points for fans, they aren't the only two X-books that will undergo drastic changes next year.

Jason Liebig, editor of *X-Force*, *Generation X*, *Mutant X* and *X-Man*, said there will be "major changes across the board" in terms of the "secondary" X-titles.

"Everything is up for grabs," he said.

While unable to elaborate on the coming changes in *X-Force*, *X-Man* and *Generation X*, Liebig revealed Captain America and Gambit will join the cast of *Mutant X* in coming months as the newest members of Havok's team, The Six.

For now, however, Liebig, Powers and company anticipate the future of the X-titles, a future that can only be brightened by the return of the preeminent X-Men writer.

"It's the 21st century," Claremont said. "We want to move forward, to build, to grow.

"It isn't just a matter of looking to the past, it's a matter of building for the future." ■ CHRISTOPHER LAWRENCE

Women find themselves in better and better comic book roles. "We're astronauts!" said breasts breasts breasts.

Guy looks at comic book at local con. "Can I help you?" asked retailer.

LET'SDOTHETIMEWARPAGAIN

FIRST SIGN OF APOCALYPSE

What do you need after an earth-shattering battle with Apocalypse? A break from reality sure would be nice. Fortunately, that's just what the X-Men are gonna get.

December's end of the Apocalypse War will unleash an explosive energy that creates–surprise, surprise!–an alternate reality in the X-Men, which appears in January's *Cable* #77, *Uncanny X-Men* #378, *X-Men* #98 and *Wolverine* #148; all are self-contained stories.

Cable's story takes place in the future, as Cable tussles with the Four Horsemen of Apocalypse. "Picture Cable as 'Lawrence of Arabia,'" said writer Joe Pruett. "He leads a rebellion against the tyrants of Egypt."

Uncanny and *X-Men* feature the past and future in this timeline. *Uncanny* focuses on Jean Grey's first day as an X-Man, while *X-Men* shows the future fate of the team.

And *Wolverine*? Writer Erik Larsen wanted to revisit the "replacement" FF from 1991's *Fantastic Four* #347–#349, where Wolvie, Spider-Man, the Hulk and Ghost Rider comprised the team.

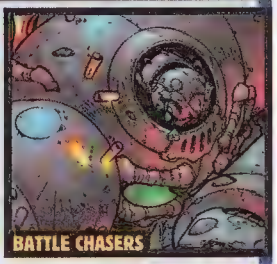
Marvel sees the books as a fun breather in the middle of an otherwise hectic period (see main story for what happens next). But if you're the kind who gets a headache from alternate realties and time travel? Pruett offered some words of advice: "Don't worry," he said. "It's just temporary." ■ JIM McLAUCHLIN

Ultra-Man gets lost during vacation in Nebraska. "Hey, fanboy, put down Witchblade comic and help me get home!" exclaimed rude foreigner at sparsely attended comic con.

PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHIRALDI

THE BUZZBIN

THE INSIDE SCOOP ON THE COMIC INDUSTRY


BATTLE CHASERS

CHASING 'CHASERS'! Don't hold your breath for *Battle Chasers* #7. By the time #6 came out, it was six months late. And rumor has it not a single person at WildStorm Productions has seen a single page from the next issue of Joe Madureira's once-sizzlin'-hot Cliffhanger book.

LIFE AFTER X-MEN Alan Davis' post-X-Men project? Most likely the book he originally wanted to do before Marvel's mutants beckoned: *Killraven*, inspired by the Earth-invaded-by-Martians story that originated in Marvel's *Amazing Adventures* from the '70s. It's unknown if Davis will continue what began 20 years ago or start fresh with this alternate reality tale.

BRITISH INVASION! On the good news front, looks like Marvel is marching ahead with a new talent infusion. British Islanders Garth Ennis and Grant Morrison are already lined up to write Marvel books in 2000. Our trans-Atlantic grapevine now tells us fellow Brit Mark Millar (*Superman Adventures*) is ready to sign up with Marvel, too.

LO, THERE SHALL COME...A MOVING! Millar might be sending his scripts to a new address. Word out of Manhattan is that the Marvel offices and beloved Bullpen will consolidate with new owner Toy Biz, a mere nine blocks away, before the year is up.

DREAMING OF WITCHBLADE? We hear that the boys at Top Cow are pretty fond of the work Pat Lee (*Darkminds*) and crew are doing at Dreamwave Productions. So much so, that the Cow and the 'Wave are negotiating a Dreamwave/*Witchblade* crossover as we speak.

MAN OF THE HOUR! *Flash* writer Mark Waid is a comic geek deluxe and he's going the extra mile for one of his fave books: DC's *Hourman*. The summer convention season saw Waid passing out hundreds of free copies of the sales-strapped title, hoping to save the book from probable cancellation.

EASY READER

DEATH OF A LEGEND! Yep. You saw it right. That's Easy Reader, beloved "Electric Company" character and star of the '70s *Spidey Super Stories* who was in the realm of the dead in *Earth X* #7. Shed a tear.

AMAZING AGAIN! MC2 writer/editor Tom DeFalco tells us the one-legged Peter Parker will be putting his webshooters back on just in time for December's *Spider-Girl* #17.

GALACTIC SHOOTER! Jim Shooter will be doing an eight-page Battlestar Galactica story for Realm Press in the pages of *Galactica–The New Millennium* #1, available now.

THEY SAID IT

IDLE CHATTER

"The wife loved the Harley character when I first started subjecting her to episodes of 'Batman.' For that reason alone we were praying for a girl."
–**KEVIN SMITH**, who's newborn daughter is named Harley Quinn Smith, after the "Batman Adventures" character

JENKINS MAKES JUMP TO HULK

'Inhumans' writer sees green

Paul Jenkins prepares to leap from Marvel Knights to green days.

Jenkins, the man who made the Inhumans cool again in the recent 12-issue Marvel Knights series, has decided to go toe-to-toe with Marvel's ever-lovin' green goliath, the Hulk. Starting in January with a double-sized issue #12, Jenkins will join current penciler Ron Garney on *The Incredible Hulk*. What can fans expect? Jenkins has one simple goal — turn up the heat.

"We are going to up the pressure on the guy," Jenkins said. "We are going to place Banner in an impossible situation that not even the Hulk could escape from easily. A sort of ticking time bomb that no one could defuse."

Jenkins plans on incorporating some classic Hulk villains in addition to adding a few new ones. "Likewise, I'll be using psychological elements like in the *Inhumans*," added Jenkins.

The title of the book will also revert to its former moniker, *The Incredible Hulk*, from its current title, *Hulk*.

"We want to show that this is a nice place to jump on for those who have never read a Hulk book before," said editor Tom Brevoort. "Also, we heard time and time again from fans that they didn't like the title as just *Hulk*."

Jenkins and Garney will serve as the *Hulk* creative team for the foreseeable future and from the praise Jenkins gives his partner, this could be a long, successful run. "I love Ron's art," said Jenkins. "Ron and I have been friends and fans of each other for some time now. Quite honestly, he's the reason why I'm doing the book." ■ **CASEY SEIJAS**

PAUL BEARER Would *you* want this guy carrying your casket?

SMITH PHOTO BY PAUL SCHIRALDI. JENKINS PHOTO BY DEREK ROCHON.

NO JOKE! FOR 1977'S MARVEL *KISS* COMIC, THE BAND MEMBERS' BLOOD WAS MIXED INTO THE COMIC'S INK.

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS

Would you believe me if I told you the sun wouldn't rise tomorrow?

There'd be nothing but darkness when you open your eyes tomorrow?

Would you believe me if I told you the stars wouldn't shine tomorrow?

Yet, look up in the sky and there'd be a sign tomorrow?

Would you trust me if I said the world is gonna end today?

And you should give me twenty dollars to save your sins today?

Would you trust me if I told you everything was a lie today?

Would you believe me if I said you were gonna die today?

The Truth® will be revealed November 17, 1999!

The Truth graphic novel comes with The Truth CD soundtrack, featuring Sonny Bones, Venus Pumping, Latin Bomb Squad, D and Poetri.

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ROSS UNVEILS ANOTHER UNIVERSE

'Earth X' sequel 'Universe X' follows Captain Mar-Vell's exploits

THE BLACK KNIGHT

Can't get enough of the Alex Ross epic, *Earth X*?

Think you'll never get your fill of the grim and gritty world in which "Plague X" granted every man, woman and child super powers?

Think again.

Universe X, the 14-issue sequel to Ross' ultra-successful current *Earth X* mini-series, explodes onto comic shop shelves next summer.

In it, Ross will reunite with co-creator/writer Jim Krueger and inker Bill Reinhold to bring readers back to the futuristic Marvel Universe where mutant genes run amok. A penciler for the project has yet to be announced.

"If *Earth X* is the great last war, *Universe X* is the return of the messiah," said co-creator Ross, who will also co-plot and provide cover art for the series.

"*Universe X* will take the ramifications of *Earth X* and turn them on their side," added Krueger. "It's definitely going to cover a lot of stuff people haven't even seen in *Earth X*."

The new mini-series will follow the beginning years of Captain Mar-Vell, a once-deceased hero who will be reborn at the outset of *Universe X*, according to the creators.

"We're literally skipping ahead three years from the end of *Earth X* to *Universe X*, where Mar-Vell is 3 years old," Ross said.

While he promises there will be no "quick growth formula stuff," the series' creator admits the young Mar-Vell will be anything but your ordinary toddler.

X-POSED Captain Mar-Vell reveals his dirty little secret.

"He will be reborn with all of his awareness and memory," Ross said. "We're talking about a 3-year-old boy who has all the years he's been alive—and dead—behind him."

And where the mutant plague and the Celestial seed served as the driving force behind the ideas and perspectives of the first series, Captain Mar-Vell and the ramifications of the seeds upon humanity will be the catalyst for the sequel.

"Every action of this little boy is going to seem very messianistic in terms of the way he will be going and gathering followers," Ross said. "He has a certain agenda he's trying to fill."

"The purpose for which Mar-Vell has come back and what Mar-Vell wants to do, they're not necessarily something most of the population of the world is excited about," Krueger said.

As such, Mar-Vell will have a mystery guardian, a classic Marvel character who will serve as protector of the enigmatic young leader.

The concepts behind the sequel stretch back about two years to the original brainstorming sessions for *Earth X*, during which Ross and Krueger devised "more than enough" ideas for any one series.

"That blossomed into the promise of a new project," Ross said. "The other ideas demanded so much space on their own, we had room for an entire sequel.

"And boy, do we ever."

In addition to the "hero reborn," *Universe X* will introduce readers to a number of other classic characters, such as Magneto, as well as some familiar locales.

"This series will have a lot of focus on the classic places in the Marvel universe," Krueger said. "What's the Savage Land now? The Negative Zone, what's happened there?

"It's definitely going to be much broader ... which is the whole sense of calling it *Universe X*, rather than 'Earth X Two.' "

The second series is expected to begin in July, and will follow the same format as the original, with 12 monthly books bracketed by issues #0 and #X.

In addition, Ross is hoping to get approval for a number of specials that would accompany *Universe X*, focusing on some of the major characters and important events of the groundbreaking tale.

Either way, Ross and Krueger agree that *Earth X* has been a phenomenal experience, one they're looking to duplicate with the next chapter in the saga.

"The first series set up all the rules," Krueger said. "In the second series, we get a chance to break them." ■ CL

NO JOKE! MATT WAGNER BASED HIS *MAGE* CHARACTER KEVIN MATCHSTICK ON HIMSELF, ALTHOUGH NOWADAYS MATT HAS A LOT LESS HAIR.

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS...

THE NEW AUTHORITIES

Ellis tabs WildStorm replacements

What Warren Ellis wants, Warren Ellis gets.

And in the case of appointing a new creative team to take over his critically acclaimed WildStorm superhero series, *The Authority*, what he wanted was the Scottish duo of writer Mark Millar (*Superman Adventures*) and artist Frank Quitely (*JLA: Earth II*).

"Mark Millar was my first and only recommendation for the job of writing *The Authority* after me — he was clearly the only writer worth considering," said Ellis. "Frank is one of the most important new artists the nineties gave us."

So, starting with next April's issue #13, Millar and Quitely will pick up where Ellis and artist Bryan Hitch, who's departing for *JLA*, leave off. But why leave such a popular book anyway? "I knew I was going to do it all along," revealed Ellis. "I wanted to spend a year doing three huge stories, each an escalation in scale from the last, and then leave. People buy *The Authority* for the manic pop thrill of weird, pretty pictures and big things blowing up. I wanted to produce these three lunatic wide-screen crackhead action movies and then split up like the Beatles."

But don't expect a radical new direction come April. "The basic format established by Warren, where each adventure is a four-issue arc in the style of a $100 million summer blockbuster, will remain unchanged, as will the tone," said Millar. "No other publisher would dare publish material of this complexity or maturity in their superhero books. This is superheroes by adults and for adults."

Millar couldn't reveal specifics about the future — he's still in the scripting process. "And it would be ungentlemanly to go into my plans when we're barely halfway through Warren's first year," said Millar.

In the meantime, Ellis fans grieving his imminent departure can rest easy—an *Authority* one-shot written by Ellis and drawn by Phil Jiminez is slated to appear in early 2000. "It's called *Planetary/The Authority: Ruling the World*," explained Ellis. "Less a team-up than a connective point between the two serials, it concerns Elijah Snow, Jenny Sparks, Doc Brass, The Snowflake, H.P. Lovecraft, big f---ing guns and eggs."

Yes, he said eggs. ■ **RICHARD HO**

ROB LIEFELD LOOKS TO Y3K PROBLEM

Y2K is no big deal. Just ask Rob Liefeld. He's already jumping ahead to the year 3000.

LIEFELD

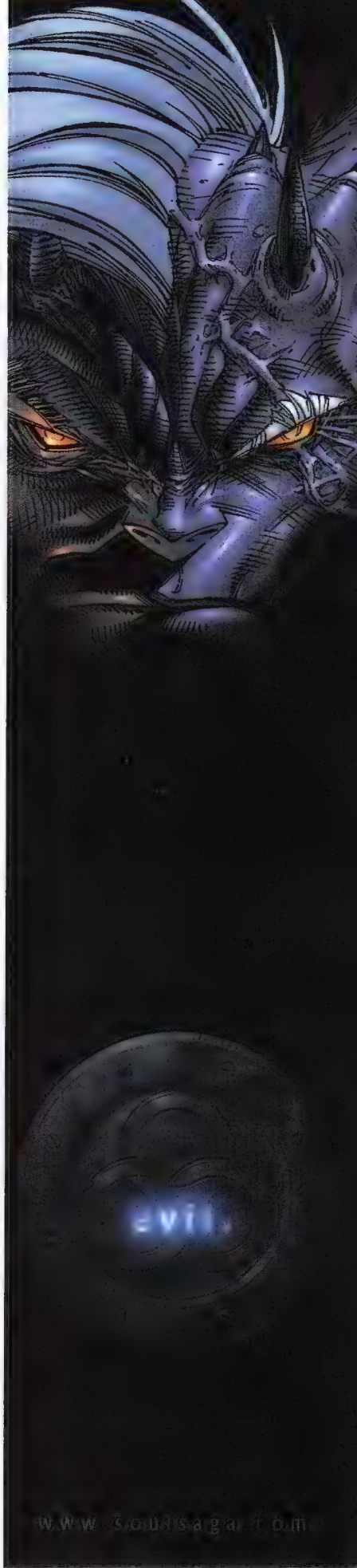
Century, a mini-series from Awesome Entertainment due on January 5, 2000, will reveal the future of popular Awesome characters in the 31st century. "I've always been a huge fan of books that are set in the future," said Awesome CEO and President Liefeld. "Traditionally, they haven't done so well. We're going to change that."

Written by Eric Stephenson (*Wolverine*), most of the art will be handled by Keron Grant (*Kaboom*). Hot artist Ian Churchill (*Coven*) and Liefeld himself will pitch in to illustrate certain scenes.

Century focuses on the Century Group, a mysterious cabal wielding great political and economic power. Liefeld promises that the series will have long-term effects on the Awesome Universe and will foreshadow many events that may befall characters in the present—especially Supreme and Glory. "*Century* does not bode well for them," Liefeld revealed.

Century should wrap up after three issues in March, with subsequent mini-series to follow later in the year. If the title sells well, however, it may be extended beyond its charted three-issue run. ■ **JUSTIN JONES**

PHOTO BY PAUL SCHRADZL



GROUP RATE Clockwise from top right: Starfire, Troia, Nightwing...ah, screw it. Figure it out yourself.

A TITANIC TUSSLE

Legion, Titans crowd 30th century

Move over, Legion of Super-Heroes. You've got company in the 30th century.

That's because the Legion runs smack-dab into the Titans in January's four-issue prestige format miniseries *Titans/Legion: Universe of Fire*. Dan Jurgens (*Teen Titans*) takes on the writing and penciling chores with inks by Phil Jiminez (*JLA/Titans*). Adventuring in Egypt, the Legion stumbles upon a cryogenic tomb underneath one of the Great Pyramids. Its occupants? The Titans, long thought dead by the futuristic teen team.

"I primarily think what comes out of this is the fun of seeing these two teams put together," said Jurgens.

Rather than the usual time travel used in Legion crossovers, *Universe of Fire* takes place in both the 21st and 30th centuries on a number of different worlds, according to Jurgens.

"It's a fast-moving story; it bounces a lot when you have this many characters," Jurgens said.

The Titans' presence in the cryogenic chamber is explained through the story of their final battle with Brother Blood. It's a battle which, according to Jurgens, has a huge impact on the 30th century, showing through when Blood faces off against the Legion and Titans with a new, improved version of the classic Legion villain Universo at his side. The real question that comes up, though, Jurgens hints, is whether the villains, or a division among the heroes will tear them apart first. ■ **RUSSELL BURLINGAME**

ON THE RUN

RUNNING MEN

Slow and steady wins the race? Not if you're Jim Balent. After 77 consecutive issues of service, the *Catwoman* penciler was unceremoniously dumped by DC Comics. Balent's run is huge in today's age of the fill-in, and even stacks up against some famous historical creative runs like Chris Claremont's 184-issue run writing *Uncanny X-Men* and Mark Gruenwald's 115-issue stint writing *Captain America*. Take a look:

DAVE SIM — 249
Writer/penciler, *Cerebus* #1-#249

JIM BALENT — 77
Penciler, *Catwoman* #1-#77

CHUCK DIXON — 73
Writer, *Robin* #1-#73

ERIK LARSEN — 70
Writer/penciler/inker, *Savage Dragon* #1-#70

I HAVE CANDY IN MY CAR.

DENNIS O'NEIL — 61
Writer, *Azrael* #1-#61

*RANKED BY CONSECUTIVE ISSUES AS OF NOVEMBER 1999

THE 'CAT WALK

Charest out, Casey in on 'Wildcats'

Good news for *Wildcats* fans: Starting in January, the book is monthly! The bad news: Artist Travis Charest will not be drawing it.

The removal of critically acclaimed but deadline-challenged Charest is part of a creative overhaul on WildStorm Productions' flagship book. Effective with February's *Wildcats* #8, new writer Joe Casey (*Majestic*) and artist Sean Phillips (*Hellblazer*) step in. "We had to accept that Travis is not made for regularly scheduled comics," said Editor Scott Dunbier. "He's a 'special projects' guy. He'll stay as cover artist only, and we'll get him working on mini-series or a graphic novel."

Charest's last issue was November's *Wildcats* #6, in which he drew only the first few pages. And after January's #7, writer Scott Lobdell will step down. "Given the work I have in front of me writing *Gen13* and my creator-owned properties [*Hellhole*, *Ball and Chain*], I thought the book was better served by allowing someone of Joe Casey's caliber in," Lobdell said of his hand-picked successor. Casey already scripted *Wildcats* #5 and #6 over Lobdell's plots.

Casey's plots are still pending approval. But one thing is sure: With #7, the book's bi-monthly schedule—in place to accommodate Charest—disappears, giving way to monthly publishing. And Dunbier thinks Vertigo vet Phillips will add more than just regularity. "This is similar to when Chris Bachalo left Vertigo to take on *Generation X*," he said, drawing comparison to the now-hot artist. "Sean will take this on and blow people away. He'll show he has great crossover appeal." ■ **JM**

DIXON, SIM AND O'NEIL PHOTOS BY ALBERT L. ORTEGA. MICHAEL JOHNSON PHOTO BY STU FORSTER. ALL OTHER PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHRADI.

NO JOKE!

AVENGERS ARTIST GEORGE PÉREZ ONCE DID THEATER PERFORMING IN "LI'L ABNER." IT IS UNKNOWN IF HIS TRADEMARK LOUD SHIRTS GOT HIM THE PART.

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS...

DC TO LOSE HALF OF SUPERMAN?

HALF MAST "The jewels. Why'd they have to take the jewels?"

Superman—now under new ownership?

That's what Joanne Siegel and Laura Siegel Larson would like to see. The wife and daughter of late Superman co-creator Jerry Siegel have filed to revoke the transfer of copyright that Siegel and partner Joe Shuster signed over to DC Comics back in 1938. The Siegels' legal leg to stand on? *Superman* was not created as "work for hire." The character was created independently by Siegel and Shuster, then sold to DC for $130 plus a contract to work on future Superman comics. If the Siegels' claim holds, they could be entitled to half of all Superman revenue.

While the Siegels and their lawyers declined comment, DC spokesperson Barbra Brogliatti did speak up. "Who owns Superman? It's DC Comics, 100 percent," she said. "What's seemingly going on is a different interpretation of copyright law. The Siegels are beloved to us. We have a long relationship that we want to continue. We've been talking to them constantly." DC's long relationship includes lawsuits filed in 1948 by Siegel and Shuster and eventual payments to both that served as pensions.

The copyright matter has not reached court, and all indications are that an agreement in which DC will retain full ownership will be arranged. In the meantime, Brogliatti said DC plans no changes in Superman publishing or licensing.

Regardless, one thing DC has locked up is the other 50 percent of Superman. Under law, only creators and their spouses and children have any recourse to creators' copyrights. Since Joe Shuster has no heirs, all creative rights revert immediately to DC Comics. ■ JM

CLOWNZ COME CARRYING CDS

Chaos! is sending in the Clownz, and since it's the holiday season, they're bringing free CDs.

This December, the crazy-rappin', ass-whoopin', World Championship Wrestlin' Insane Clown Posse will begin prepackaging a never-before-heard CD single in 12 consecutive issues of the Chaos! Comics mini-series, *Insane Clown Posse: The Pendulum*, starting in issue #4. The singles will eventually compile the Motor City Clownz new CD, aptly titled "The Pendulum."

"It's going to take a while for the full CD to come out, but it will be worth it for ICP fans," said Chaos! editor Gregg Pisani. "After all, you wind up with a brand new CD worth of ICP songs that you can't get anywhere else — what could be cooler?" ■ CS

FANTASTIC FILL-IN?

HELP WANTED

The end of the world may be near–at least for the Fantastic Four. "We're talking Celestials, worlds colliding and spaceships the size of Manhattan Island," writer Chris Claremont said of November's *FF* #25. The result? One member leaves and a new one joins. *Wizard* stacks up the potential replacements with comments by Claremont.

MARVEL GIRL "She's a logical choice," Claremont said of the Invisible Woman and Dr. Doom's daughter from an alternate future. "But a kid her age has got to be in school. I guess she could probably fit it in."

ODDS: 2-1. She's the obvious choice to fill the void since Claremont's been setting her up as a major player with major powers for months.

SHE-HULK "There's a sense of been there, done that. Also it makes it half women, half men, which everyone will accuse me of doing anyway. I certainly wouldn't have a problem with that."

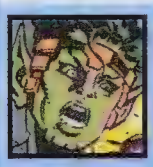
ODDS: 10-1. She's an old favorite and if it's the Thing who gets the boot, she might add some much-needed muscle.

NAMORITA "A possibility. You never know. She and Johnny [Storm, The Human Torch] seem to be hitting it off in the *New Warriors*."

ODDS: 20-1. Namorita was Claremont's own addition to the list. And she's made a few guest appearances in the FF already. This could be her big chance to prove she's not just another second stringer.

DR. DOOM "How *about* Doom?" Claremont says coyly. "Anything is possible. It would certainly be one of the more interesting twists in recent memory, but on the other hand why take over the FF when you can take over the whole world?"

ODDS: 50-1. Expect Doom to be the cause of problems, not the solution.



LYJA LAZERFIST "The utterly vicious part of me keeps thinking of her," he says of the Torch's estranged, Skrull wife. "There's a lot of demand from a certain segment of readers to bring her back."

ODDS: 75-1. She'd be unexpected, and that kind of change could be just the spark the books needs.

JOHN BYRNE "You never know...."

ODDS: One billion to 1. It's the only way Claremont and Byrne'll ever work together again outside of an edict from God. And Claremont even gets the final say! ■ **MIKE COTTON**

'MARVEL MANIA' CLOSES DOORS

Looks like the last supper has been served at Marvel Mania. The world's first comic-themed restaurant located at Universal Studios Escape in Universal City, Calif., closed its doors on September 10, 1999. A statement by the studio claims the restaurant wasn't a failure, and says Universal plans on converting the site into a theme park attraction in a shuffling of space.

While one-pound Hulk Burgers and Fin Fang Foom Fruit Fajitas are off the menu for now, the possibility remains that a new Marvel Mania restaurant may open at Universal's Orlando, Fla., site.

In the meantime, all Marvel Mania props including life-size Iron Man armor and Captain America shield have been put into cold storage, making theft by well-meaning journalists impossible. Damn. ■ **JM**

CLOSING TIME Sigh. Guess it's back to White Castle...

'KIRBY COMICS' BRINGS BACK THE KING

There's a new resident in the castle of the King.

The works of Jack "King" Kirby, the legendary comic artist who had a hand in creating such beloved characters as Captain America and the Fantastic Four before passing away in 1994, are coming back. And the man bringing them back is an heir to the throne—Jeremy Kirby, Jack's grandson.

Kirby Comics debuts in April, leading off with a three-issue *Captain Victory* mini-series based on Jack's creator-owned Pacific Comics series of the early 1980s. Jeremy will write the new series, telling the origin of the space-faring hero. "I came up with a whole new plot going through all 13 original issues," Jeremy said. Art will include "remastered" original *Captain Victory* pages, and a few surprises. "We went through storage and found new pages never before printed that will be worked in," Jeremy said, "and a new character that was lost for 25 years."

The new character may spin into a new series, and new talent may be called in. Kirby has already talked with Steve Rude (*X-Men: Children of the Atom*) and Alex Ross (*Earth X*) about working with Kirby Comics.

In all, the venture is family tradition, and a labor of love. "Sometimes, if I was staying with my grandparents," Jeremy said, "I'd wake up at 2 a.m., and Grandpa would still be up drawing. I can't let that fade away." ■ **JM**

BYRNE PHOTO BY MATTHEW J. ATANIAN; MARVEL MANIA PHOTO BY PAUL SCHIRALDI

NO JOKE! ASPEN MATTHEWS, THE LEAD CHARACTER IN MICHAEL TURNER'S *FATHOM*, IS OFTEN SEEN WEARING PERIWINKLE, A SHADE OF BLUE. IT'S TURNER'S MOM'S FAVORITE COLOR.

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS.

TONY'S TWISTER BLOWS INTO TOWN

Tony Daniel's new ongoing series from Image, *F5*, is really cookin' up a storm.

An "F5" tornado is the most powerful rating meteorologists can give a tornado. While the 12-member team in Daniel's new book pose as mere meteorologists, they are actually an elite team of ex-Navy SEALs tracking down villains worldwide.

"*F5* is inspired by my interest in espionage, weapons of war, the military, James Bond flicks and John Woo flicks—and of course, there's nothing sexier than a woman holding a big gun," said the writer/artist behind *The Tenth* and *Adrenalynn*. He promises his new series will have plenty of realistic action and adventure, and that not every team member will survive every adventure.

Though the first issue of the creator-owned *F5* won't be out until April 2000, Daniel is already negotiating for a possible television series or movie deal. In the meantime, look for a special *F5* preview in January, with full-color art, character bios and sketches.

As for *The Tenth*, its status after December—when the current mini-series *The Tenth: Evil's Child* by Daniel, ends—is unclear. Daniel is negotiating with Japanese companies to produce a manga *Tenth* comic to be released spring 2000; if that falls through, look for more mini-series with rotating guest artists. ■ JJ

WAR GAMES F5? You sunk my battleship!

OOPS...

WE SUCK

There are no TV exhibits at the Warner Bros. Museum as was incorrectly mentioned in *Wizard* #96.

In the WildStorm special, the photo IDs for Bryan Hitch and Roberto Flores were misidentified.

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COMPANY SPOTLIGHT

HERE'S LOOKING AT...

WHO: Oni Press

THE SCOOP: Oni exploded onto the scene in early '98 with superstar Kevin Smith's *Clerks* and couldn't print enough copies to meet demand. Since then, they've built a loyal following of "Oni Zombies" with titles including *Jay and Silent Bob*, *Whiteout*, *Geisha*, and *The Blair Witch Project*.

WHY YOU SHOULD CARE: Oni has an uncanny knack for landing big-name creators while still maintaining an art-house sensibility. Besides Smith, Frank Miller, Paul Dini and Bill Sienkiewicz have done work for Oni. Publisher Joe Nozemack cites creator freedom as the reason Oni has nabbed so many superstars, and–what a guy!–he's not even mad when writer Greg Rucka hit it big with Oni's *Whiteout* and then signed to do *Detective Comics*. "If he's writing Batman and people dig it, there's more of a chance they'll pick up *Whiteout*," he says. "It's good for all of us." And Rucka hasn't burned his Oni bridges: His sequel *Whiteout: Melt* began this month.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING: "I see us doing stuff more like books and less like periodicals," Nozemack says of the company's focus on contained storyarcs and with the ending of the anthology *Oni Double Feature*, the company now exclusively publishes mini-series and one-shots. "By doing it this way, you don't burn out the creators and fans as fast."

THE TWIST: Notice Oni's books don't feature any men in tights? "We like all genres; we just like to mess with the ones nobody else is messing with," Nozemack says. "Our two biggest hits were comedy [*Clerks*] and horror [*The Blair Witch Project*]. Who's getting hits with comedy and horror these days?" Oni continues to buck the trend with Paul Dini's first creator-owned book *Jingle Belle*, a two-issue mini beginning November. It's a humorous send-up of TV Christmas specials starring Santa's rebellious teenage daughter. Also planned for 2000 is Judd Winnick's mini-series *Barry Ween, Boy Genius*. ■ JJ

JAY (RIGHT) AND SILENT BOB

CBLDF CRUISES WITH COMICS GREATS

Just because "Speed 2" sank at the box office doesn't mean a cruise ship can't be fun. All you need are some great comic talents instead of Sandra Bullock.

The Comic Book Legal Defense Fund will host its first-ever fundraising cruise as a seven-day event in April, 2000. Confirmed guests include Frank Miller (*Sin City*), Neil Gaiman (*Sandman*), Will Eisner (*The Spirit*) and Kurt Busiek (*Avengers*).

LOVE STINKS Exciting and new? You bet your ass! And we're expecting you.

The cruise setting will allow for fan interaction not possible at a convention. Imagine eating dinner with Eisner or schmoozing with Busiek at a cocktail party. Gaiman will hold one of his famed midnight readings, as well as conduct a writer's workshop. "People will have the time of their life," said CBLDF Executive Director Chris Oarr.

Fans will want to reserve tickets early, as attendance will likely be capped at 300. Stops will be made along the Mexican Riveria in Puerto Vallarta, Mazatlan and Cabo San Lucas, with prices starting as low as $1,099. For more information, call the CBLDF at 1-800-992-2533 or visit their Website at www.cbldf.org.

■ BRIAN YOUNG

ROMITA'S PITCH

Marvel Comics may have found a big-league hurler to plug in its starting rotation.

John Romita Jr., penciler on *Thor* and *Peter Parker: Spider-Man*, recently had the chance to strut his stuff before a major league baseball game between the San Diego Padres and the New York Mets.

BOO YORKER Silly Met fan. Stick to comics.

Romita's wife won the opportunity for John to throw out the first pitch at a Padres game while the couple was at a charity fund-raiser for San Diego's Pomerado Hospital.

Surrounded by friends and family, Romita Jr., a native New Yorker, took the mound wearing a Mets cap. Needless to say, the Padre faithful were less than hospitable.

"I'm probably the first guy in the history of charity work to get booed," Romita Jr. joked.

So how'd Romita Jr. do in his major league debut?

"I threw a high fastball, in the strike zone," Romita Jr. said. "It would have been a brush-back, but it was a strike."

Pretty confident in his stuff. But could he take on the other major league ball hog, Todd McFarlane?

"From one old ballplayer from way back, I could wipe up the batting cage with him," Romita Jr. said, tongue firmly in cheek.

■ ANDY SERWIN

LOVE BOAT PHOTO COURTESY OF FOTO FANTASIES. HEAD SHOTS GAIMEN, MILLER AND BUSIEK BY ALBERT L. ORTEGA, BUSIEK BY PAUL SCHRADER. ROMITA JR. PHOTO COURTESY OF ROMITA JR.'S MOTHER-IN-LAW

NO JOKE! BATMAN'S ARCH-NEMESIS THE JOKER WAS PATTERNED AFTER CONRAD VEIDT'S CHARACTER IN THE FILM "THE MAN WHO LAUGHS."

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS

ALLRED LAUNCHES ATOMIC ATTACK

Mike Allred looks to explode in 2000.

And he hopes his new creator-owned book *The Atomics* blows out the next millennium with a mushroom cloud.

January is ground zero for the launch of Allred's new creator-owned book which will be self-published by his brand-new company, AAA Pop Comics. *The Atomics* spins off from Allred's current long-running project, *Madman Comics* (published by Dark Horse), and tells the story of the Mutant Street Beatniks, supporting characters that fans should be familiar with.

"Their name should say it all," Allred says. "They're very counter-culture. And they hate [Madman] right off the bat."

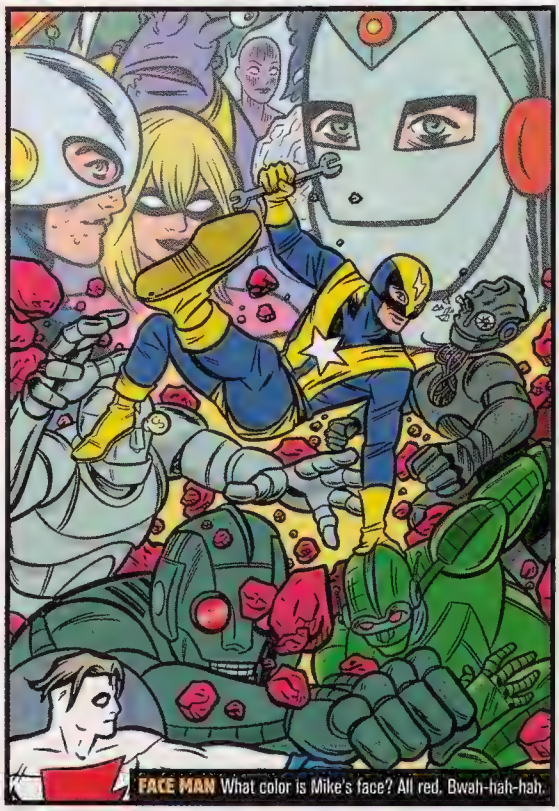
But that animosity quickly gets squashed when the Mutant Street Beatniks gain super-human powers because of an alien spore buried under their street in Snap City. When the Atomics are born, they need Madman's help in learning where their powers came from and how to use them.

Allred's got a new power of his own—tunnel vision—and he's putting it good use. He's tied up all his other outside commitments to concentrate solely on comics, something he says he hasn't done in almost four years.

"I hope my enthusiasm for *The Atomics* shines through to the readers. I can tell you honestly, I've never been more excited," Allred said. "There's a big risk in self-publishing, but if we can sustain it, we'll go on forever. Or at least 'til I drop dead."

Allred's got the ideas and the motivation, now he just has to wait and see which way the fallout from *The Atomics* blows.

■ ANDY SERWIN



FACE MAN What color is Mike's face? All red. Bwah-hah-hah.

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NEWS&NOTES

AWESOME ENTERTAINMENT

Super-painter **Alex Ross** does up a brand-new cover for December's *Supreme Hardcover*, reprinting a whopping 12 issues of *Supreme* written by Alan Moore.

SUPREME TRADE PAPERBACK

CHAOS! COMICS

Fiends, rejoice! Chaos! founder **Brian Pulido** brings you all up to date with December's *Chaos! Chronicles*, a 40-page history of the Chaos! cosmos.

DARK HORSE COMICS

Groo veteran **Sergio Aragonés** brings his comedy stylings to *Blair Which?*, a spoof of movie "The Blair Witch Project" in December.

DC COMICS

Gritty writer **Brian Azzarello** (*100 Bullets*) takes on the mean streets of London as the new *Hellblazer* writer, effective with January's issue #145.

IMAGE COMICS

Dragon, Santa Claus and the "F" word all appear in the Christmas extravaganza that is ***Savage Dragon*** #70. You have been warned. Larry Marder is out and *Shadowhawk* creator **Jim Valentino** is in as new executive director at Image Comics.

• Todd McFarlane Productions
Throw out your King James—it's time for the ***Spawn Bible II*** in December! Characters are profiled and secrets revealed, including the mysterious history of the Hellspawn!

• Top Cow Productions
E.V.E. Protomecha, the tale of a cybernetic woman trying to find her humanity, debuts in February. Liquid! Graphics founders Christian Lichtner and Aron Coleite write.

MARVEL COMICS

Congrats to Sal Velluto and Bob Almond! They're the new art team on ***Black Panther***.

ONI PRESS

Jinx creator **Brian Michael Bendis** unleashes *Fortune & Glory*, the true tale of working in Hollywood, in December.

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT

Jolly ol' writer/artist **Mark Crilley** puts *Akiko* #37 under the tree in December, as Earth girl Akiko and her space pals go "moonshopping."

NUDE BIBLE STORIES

Penthouse has taken on an effort of, well, biblical proportions.

Starting in 2000, *Penthouse*, the magazine of "Sex, Politics and Protest" will be publishing the "Illustrated Bible" within its pages. The "Illustrated Bible" will be painted by Scott Hampton and written by Keith Giffen, the man who brought us the ultraviolent Lobo and has written for *Penthouse Comix*.

However, everyone involved is quick to point out what intentions really are with the "Illustrated Bible."

"We're treating it with respect," said Giffen. "We're not making any of it up, we're just tasteless enough to show it."

Giffen and editor Dave Elliott both point out that the Bible is a fairly graphic collection of stories, and so they don't feel embellishing is either wanted or needed. "If it's not in the Bible, we're not doing it," said Giffen. "I would have liked to do a 'porno-bible,'" he added with a laugh, "but we're definitely doing a serious retelling."

The series should take a few years to finish, running in six-page monthly installments. "Right now we're at Episode 5 and just gotten to the part where Eve eats the fruit in Genesis," said Elliott. ■ NACHIE CASTRO

ADAM'S APPLE Spoiler Warning: He eats it.

THUMBINGOFF

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

THUMBS UP

MOORE'S ABC LINE Ten years after *Watchmen*, Alan Moore rocks the comics world again with his ABC line. He brings 100-year-old classic literature characters alive in *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, creates hysterical science satire with "Jack B. Quick" in *Tomorrow Stories*, and makes you truly care about each character of *Top 10*'s mammoth cast. Which one is our favorite ABC book? Whichever one we read last.

UNITY 2000 Jim Shooter returns to comics after a three-year sabbatical in grand fashion with Acclaim's *Unity 2000* #1. Not only does it interest us in Acclaim again by reviving the cool Valiant heroes, but reminds us how great those old Valiants that Shooter wrote back in '92 really were.

FINAL FANTASY VIII We've seen the future of video games, and it's *Final Fantasy VIII*. With a complex story and awesome CGI animation, *FF VIII* delivers the goods with a 15-minute animated conclusion that blows *FF VII*—and all other video games—outta the water.

THUMBS DOWN

MYSTERIO Mysterio Mania is running rampant at Marvel and it's ruined the third-tier villain. First, Mysterio masterminded Daredevil's woes at the powerful climax of Kevin Smith's *DD* run before being killed. Cool, huh? Only one problem. Mysterio showed up in *Amazing Spider-Man* that month, *X-Man* #57 two months later and appeared in *every* September-shipping Marvel book as part of a free comic insert. Note to Marvel: Dudes, the guy's *dead*.

HAL AS SPECTRE Just when we thought Hal Jordan could rest in peace, he returns in the identity of...the new Spectre??? Let's face it: fans ain't gonna be happy unless he's GREEN LANTERN. Period. The only people happy with this are Kyle Rayner fans.

'TITANS' It looked promising with a classic Titans roster and rising star Devin Grayson writing it...but it stinks. In addition to the classics, the team's "reserves" clutter the book. And for a team that thrives on interaction, each issue progressively has *too much* talk and too little breakneck action scenes. We hope these are merely growing pains, 'cause Grayson's too talented to keep dropping stinkers.

NO JOKE!

BOOKS OF MAGIC WRITER/ARTIST PETER GROSS TEACHES UP-AND-COMING COMIC ARTISTS AT THE MINNEAPOLIS COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN.

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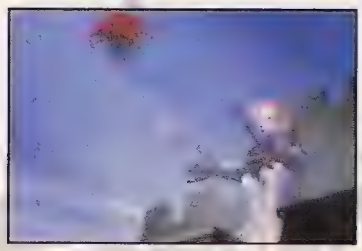

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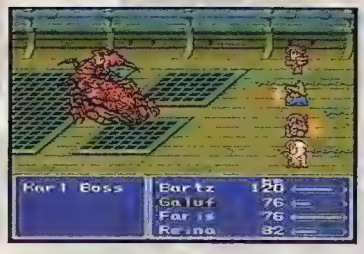

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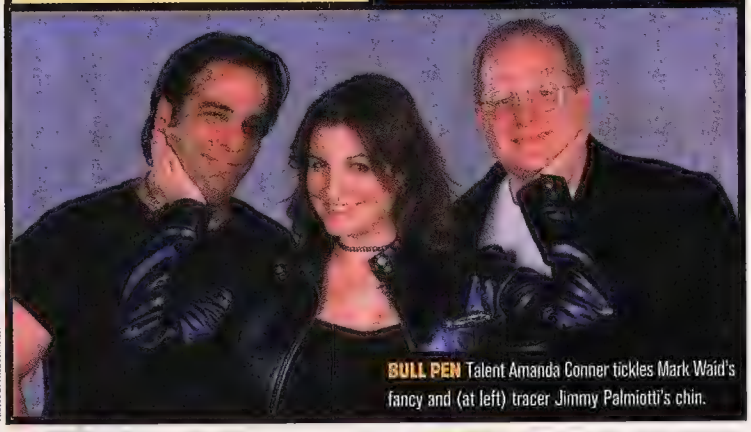
OUT OF THE GATE

'Gatecrasher' kicks off Shamus' new comic company Black Bull

GATECRASHER

SHAMUS



BULL PEN Talent Amanda Conner tickles Mark Waid's fancy and (at left) tracer Jimmy Palmiotti's chin.

PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHIRALDI

Look out, comic fans: there's a bull on the loose. A black bull. Black Bull Comics—owned and operated by Wizard Entertainment Chairman/CEO Gareb Shamus—makes its comic debut this January under the flagship title, *Gatecrasher*. Written by Mark Waid with art by Amanda Conner and Jimmy Palmiotti, *Gatecrasher* kicks open the door with a four-issue mini-series feeding into May's ongoing monthly.

"I wanted to do comic books for a long time," said Shamus, who founded his 230,000-circulation monthly comics' magazine *Wizard* in 1991. "Upon the reflection of getting to 100 issues of *Wizard*, I realized how much time has passed before I got a chance to do comics."

Shamus' newest comics venture begs a number of questions. Here's how things shake down with Black Bull:

WHAT IS BLACK BULL? Just like Marvel or DC, Black Bull Comics is the umbrella name for the comics company exclusively owned and operated by Shamus. The line will feature multiple titles and/or universes, similar to DC's Cliffhanger imprint or Marvel's Marvel Knights line. Its premiere comic title is *Gatecrasher*.

WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH ITS FIRST TITLE 'GATECRASHER'? *Gatecrasher* follows the exploits of a half-human/half-alien teenager named Split who's torn between his alien lineage and his attempt to live a normal lifestyle.

"He's secretly a member of this hidden accumulated alien race that is protecting us from interdimensional invasions," explained Waid. "Gatecrashers refers to the alien alliance that they're up against and their method of operations to open up dimensional portals with which to invade Earth. Our guy is the only guy who knows where and when they will open, so he's the point man who actually leaps into these gates to confront the villains on their home turf."

Split also faces opposition wherever he goes. That's all thanks to his mother being an Earthling and his father an alien who led the charge against Earth.

"He doesn't fit in with the other aliens, they look at him as the monkey boy," said Waid. "They recognize the fact that he's talented but he's never going to be one of them and conversely, he's the same way with earthlings."

Other primary characters in the story will be Split's earthling cousin on his mother's side, the only peer to know about his little secret.

"She's like a big sister," Waid added. "There is not a romantic relationship. It would be nice to write a male-female relationship in comics that isn't based on sexual tension."

NO JOKE! MARVEL'S 1996 "HEROES REBORN" REVAMP OF EXISTING CHARACTERS BY FORMER MARVEL ARTISTS JIM LEE AND ROB LIEFELD STARTED UNDER THE WORKING TITLE OF "UNFINISHED BUSINESS."

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS...

HOW WILL *WIZARD: THE COMICS MAGAZINE* BE INVOLVED? The same way it's involved with any other comic. *Wizard*'s editorial team remains separate from the comic creators, and the *Wizard* logo will not appear on any Black Bull comics. While Shamus plans on utilizing paid advertising and promotional opportunities in both *Wizard* and other comic venues, editorial coverage for Black Bull will be based on merit.

"The reality is that if the books are bad," said *Wizard* Editor Brian Cunningham, "*Wizard* will report that the books are bad. The resolution to any kind of conflict is *Wizard* being incredibly honest with its fans like it always has been."

DOES BLACK BULL REPRESENT A CONFLICT OF INTEREST? Not really. Sure, the obvious question raised by this venture is: How can the Shamus-owned *Wizard* objectively report on an industry he now has a vested interest in? Shamus promises a level of integrity similar to how the Time-Warner-owned *Entertainment Weekly* reviews the movie industry, including projects from the company-owned Warner Bros.

"On a creative end, it's not a conflict of interest," said Marvel Editor-in-Chief Bob Harras. "As long as Black Bull is treated in *Wizard* as fairly or unfairly as any other product, there won't be a problem."

DC Publisher Paul Levitz agreed it's not a conflict of interest, but found fault with the comparison to Time-Warner-owned *Entertainment Weekly*, which DC is also a subsidiary of.

"I don't think it's a fair comparison," Levitz said. "In the case of *Time* or *Entertainment Weekly* and Warner Bros., they are 3,000 miles away, have totally different staffs and there's no corporate point of contact until you get up to the level of common ownership by the parent company Time Warner."

WHAT ELSE IS PLANNED FOR THE COMPANY? *Gatecrasher* represents the only definitive launch by Black Bull...for now. However, plans are currently in the works for additional titles, possibly as soon as summer 2000.

"We're not looking to publish as many titles as we can," said Shamus. "We're looking to create very, very high-quality comics."

In keeping with the recent industry trend, this launch doesn't just involve comics. Video games, toys, movies and television projects are all factored in Black Bull's long-term plans.

"I know many people in those areas now," said Shamus. "And I know they're always looking for things to create for their media, so naturally we'll go into those areas. But we're not going to do that at the expense of putting out a great comic book." ■ **MATT SENREICH AND JOE YANARELLA**

BLACKMAIL

SHOOTING FROM THE LIP

The announcement of Black Bull Comics has the comic industry buzzing with reactions ranging from excitement to concern. Here's a sample of what some high-profile professionals think:

STAN LEE "I think it's kind of odd that [Gareb Shamus] would compete with the companies that he's writing about. It sounds kind of funny."

CHRIS CLAREMONT "I'm encouraged anyone would be willing to enter the publishing game at this point. It reflects a confidence."

ALEX ROSS "Sounds like a monopoly."

J. SCOTT CAMPBELL "I look forward to seeing it. But if it's on the cover [of Wizard] every month, it'll be a little bit of a monopoly, and I'm sure that would be a pitfall and something Gareb'll try to avoid."

ROB LIEFELD "More power to him. I don't understand why anyone would be hot under the collar. Anyone who can do something good for comics should."

JIM SHOOTER "I'm surprised it's taken this long for it to happen. As far as creators go, I wish them the best of luck."

PETER DAVID "As far as the moaning goes, I ran into some of the same problems when I was working at Marvel and writing [freelance] at the same time. Some editors were worried I'd give more attention to the stuff I wrote–but it's not really a big deal." ■

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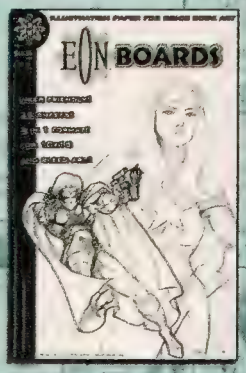

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TURNER ROCKS FATHOM'S BOAT

Hold onto your thongs because Michael Turner's about to make some serious waves in the underwater world of *Fathom*.

The first ripples will be felt this October and November when Turner kicks off his second major storyarc in the tale of Aspen Matthews, a marine biologist with amazing superhero powers, by killing off some major players and drastically altering others.

While Turner was intentionally vague on who will take the big seaweed nap, he did reveal that a major shakeup is imminent.

"We're going to see some replacements for the main characters," Turner said. "The ending of issue nine is going to get rid of some of those guys and we'll see more of one's with smaller roles come to the forefront. "

Turner also hopes to use the launch of the second storyarc as an opportunity to move away from the serious topics he's dealt with so far and have some fun with issue #10. That issue will introduce a new character who has hunted an undersea monster for over 50 years. A Captain Ahab versus Moby Dick relationship is the way Turner described the story but said unlike the Herman Melville classic, this story will be a lot of fun.

TURNER
PHOTO BY PAUL SCHRADER

In addition to the light-hearted tone for issue #10, Turner plans on diving into more fantastic and abnormal type themes. In future stories, Aspen will assume a proactive role and grow more comfortable with her powers to use water and energy creations as weapons and even turning her entire body into water.

Readers can also expect to see Aspen seeking out where she's from and putting more of her memories back in place in the second arc.

Further in the future, Turner plans a team-up story for Fathom, Witchblade and Lara Croft of *Tomb Raider* to take place in the pages of *Fathom*. MC

WATER BALLOONS Fathom (left) and Witchblade consummate... hey, wait a minute. What's up with Turner's hair? Somebody get that boy a comb!

NO JOKE! STEVE SKROCE AND GEOF DARROW WORKED ON STORYBOARDS AND CHARACTER DESIGNS FOR "THE MATRIX."

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welcome to the new millennium

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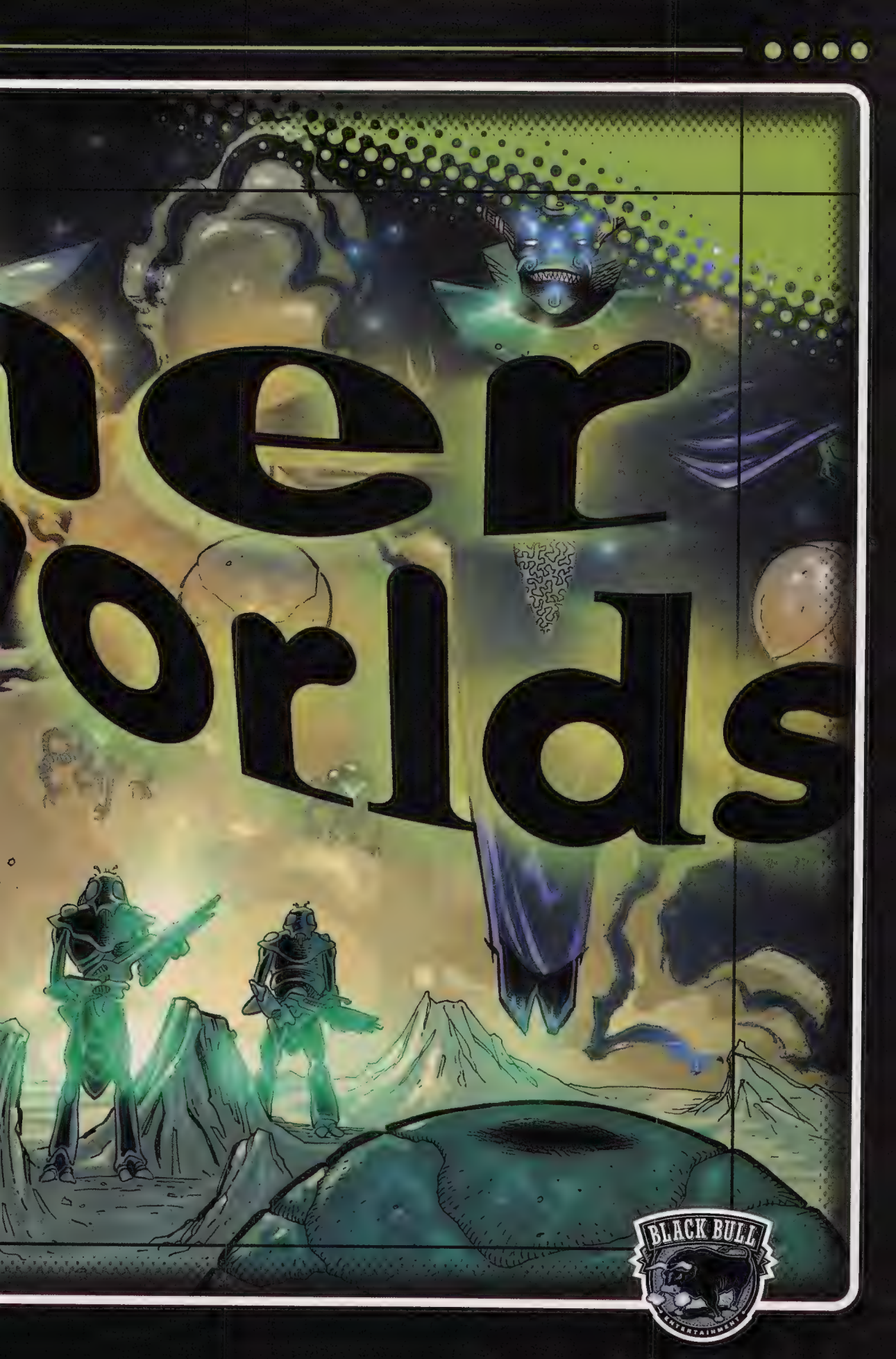
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let's get this party started!

the power

gareb shamus, publisher

Producing my own comic has always been a dream of mine.

Every year since I started Wizard I've told myself, "This is the year I'm going to do it." I kept pushing it back and back until before I knew it, almost 100 issues of producing Wizard had passed.

In Wizard, one of the loudest themes I hear from you is how to go about starting or creating a comic book. As much as I know about the business and all the people I know in the business, I can honestly say it takes a lot more talent, time, energy and money than even I thought.

This is an industry where everyone has the right to create characters and stories. As you can see from what I've done here at Wizard, I plan to apply it to comic books - Create the best product you can, market it well, ship it on time and have lots of fun.

And that's what I plan to do.

the creative

mark waid, writer

When Gareb asked me to write the flagship book of the Black Bull launch, I was skeptical. Was he serious about doing comics? Was this a "loss leader" designed as a commercial for action figures, video games, and movie options? "If you're asking me to write," I said, "then be prepared for me to *write*. To invest 100% in a story that entertains and uplifts. With characters I can relate to. Something I *like*."

And what did Gareb say?

"Well, *duh*."

Turns out I had him at, "If you're asking me to write..."

amanda conner, artist

"Yer kidding, right?" is what I said when the Black Bull guys told me they wanted me on their first title. "Whoah! This rocks! I am so gonna dig doing this!"

So here I am, designing brand new characters, creating whole new worlds, and I even get to throw my two cents in during the writing sessions. But if I get too belligerent, I get pencils and food thrown at me. It's kinda' like the Three Stooges make a comic, but instead of a wrecked bathroom we've created an amazing comic!

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NO JOKE!

MICHAEL TURNER POSSESSES A RED SASH-BELT (THAT'S INSTRUCTOR LEVEL!) IN TAE KWON DO AND CHOI LI FUT.

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS...

LAST MAN STANDING

comic battles you never thought you'd see

KEEP-SQUEEZIN'-THEM-MONKEYS LAD VS. THE WIZARD BUNNY

THE COMBATANTS

TALE OF THE TAPE

5'7"	HEIGHT	5'9"
140 lbs.	WEIGHT	170 lbs.
67"	REACH	70"
Monkeys	PASSION	Scotch
Spandex	SHAME	Pellets

Armed with an unquenchable thirst for justice and zero tolerance for monkey chicanery, Keep-Squeezin'-Them-Monkeys Lad is the last line of defense against the vile simian hordes that plague mankind!

Not an employee of Wizard Entertainment, though drawing a paycheck through an accounting error, the Bunny roams the *Wizard* halls dispensing arbitrary judgment with his really, really big hammer.

tha battle... Irritated that *Wizard* keeps devoting pages to Keep-Squeezin'-Them-Monkeys Lad instead of covering comics, the Bunny goes in search of Monkey Lad. After roaming the *Wizard* Bullpen for hours, the Bunny of Vengeance discovers his prey in *Wizard*'s cabana-themed cafeteria. "Hey, what's up, budd—ooOOOOF!" exclaims K.S.T.M.L. as a swing of the bunny's hammer knocks him from his olive-loaf lunch. Startled but ever-ready for battle, the Simian Stomper draws his pistol and discharges a blast of liquefied monkey at the Bunny. Sidestepping the vile blast, the Bunny hurtles his hammer at K.S.T.M.L....who smiles smugly as the hammer impacts harmlessly above him. "Looks like you lose..." the Simian Squeezer starts as he realizes too late the Bunny's true target: the vending machine behind him. As the avalanche of Yoo Hoo cans engulfs the Baboon Basher, the Bunny calmly retrieves his hammer—and a frosty one for himself—as Keep-Squeezin'-Them-Monkeys Lad disappears both beneath the growing mound of Yoo Hoo cans and from the pages of *Wizard*...forever.

this month's battle photographed by PAUL SCHIRALDI

FIRSTLOOK

THE 7TH PORTAL

Stan Lee opens a new door for comics with his non-Marvel debut

Stan Lee knows how to make enemies. As the Marvel Comics founder gears up to launch his first comic creations *outside* Marvel, he lets us in on a little secret. The bad guys finish first.

"You'll have to wait for the story to see our heroes," Lee chuckles. "But our villains are gruesome to the core and reek of evil from every pore. I think you'll come to hate them."

The baddies debut in *The 7th Portal*, an online comic hitting the Stan Lee Media Web site at www.stanlee.net in December. When a portal-hopping conqueror named Zorrok sets his eyes on our dimension, he encounters a slight problem.

"The only way Zorrok himself can enter our dimension is through the hidden 7th Portal," Lee reveals. "Zorrok has an enchanted crystal with a code. If he can crack the code, he can find the Portal. Our heroes must prevent that."

To keep the good guys occupied, Zorrok sics his minions—who *can* visit our dimension—on them. Here's the quick rundown according to Lee:

KROG

"Krog is the strongest thing there is. A very tough customer—you don't want him on your tail."

SLYME

"Slyme has personality to match his name. He hates everyone. His chief weapon has an amazing variety of powers. I can't tell you what it does yet, but I love writing it."

WHIPSAW

Whipsaw's whip "is not made of anything solid. You can't touch it but it can cut through anything."

VULTURA

Vultura is the team's flier. "She's Zorrok's eyes and ears, the team's scout."

BEARHUG

Five-foot-tall Bearhug "resents being small, but makes up for it in nastiness. Once he gets his arms around something, it's done."

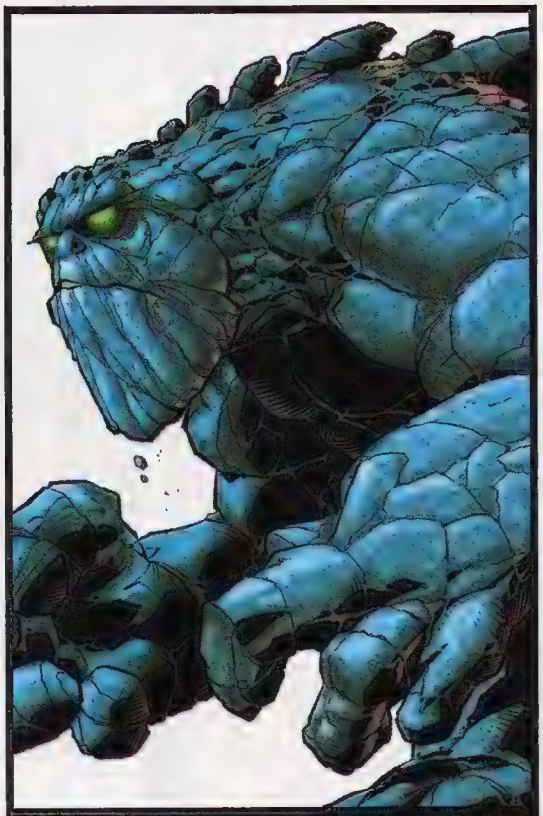
VENDETTA

"She shoots lasers out her fingers. She and Vultura are always vying for the attention of Zorrok. They're rivals on the team."

Using real-life audio for character voices instead of word balloons or captions, *The 7th Portal* comes across as a miniature movie. "We're not quite as animated as Disney…yet!" says Lee. "But there's more than you would expect. I've got a good feeling about this 'Internet' thing. I think it will revolutionize everything—comic books included."

Senior Staff Writer Jim McLauchlin's got a good feeling about cheese and Kentucky bourbon. And lawn darts.

BY JIM McLAUCHLIN



KILLER KROG You don't want to meet this cuddly guy in a dark alley. He's known for snacking on kittens.

PORTHOLES

THE DILLY-O

A massively powered conqueror named Zorrok and his six footsoldiers have their sights on Earth. Six defenders rise up to meet them in a battle written by Stan Lee through his new online venture, Stan Lee Media.

WHY YOU CARE

Because it's *Stan Lee*, fer cryin' out loud! The same guy who helped come up with Spider-Man, the Fantastic Four, the Hulk and a million other Marvel characters is unleashing all-new creations. On the Internet, no less! Could he strike gold twice?

DID YOU KNOW?

A whole studio worth of comic and animation artists are needed to bring *The 7th Portal* to life. Comic vets include Art Director Shawn McManus (*Swamp Thing*), penciler Duncan Rouleau (*M. Rex*) and colorist Paul Mounts (*Tellos*).

SINISTER SIX-PACK *7th Portal*'s villains include (clockwise from top): Krog, Vendetta, Bearhug, Vultura, Whipsaw and Slyme.

SUPERHERO

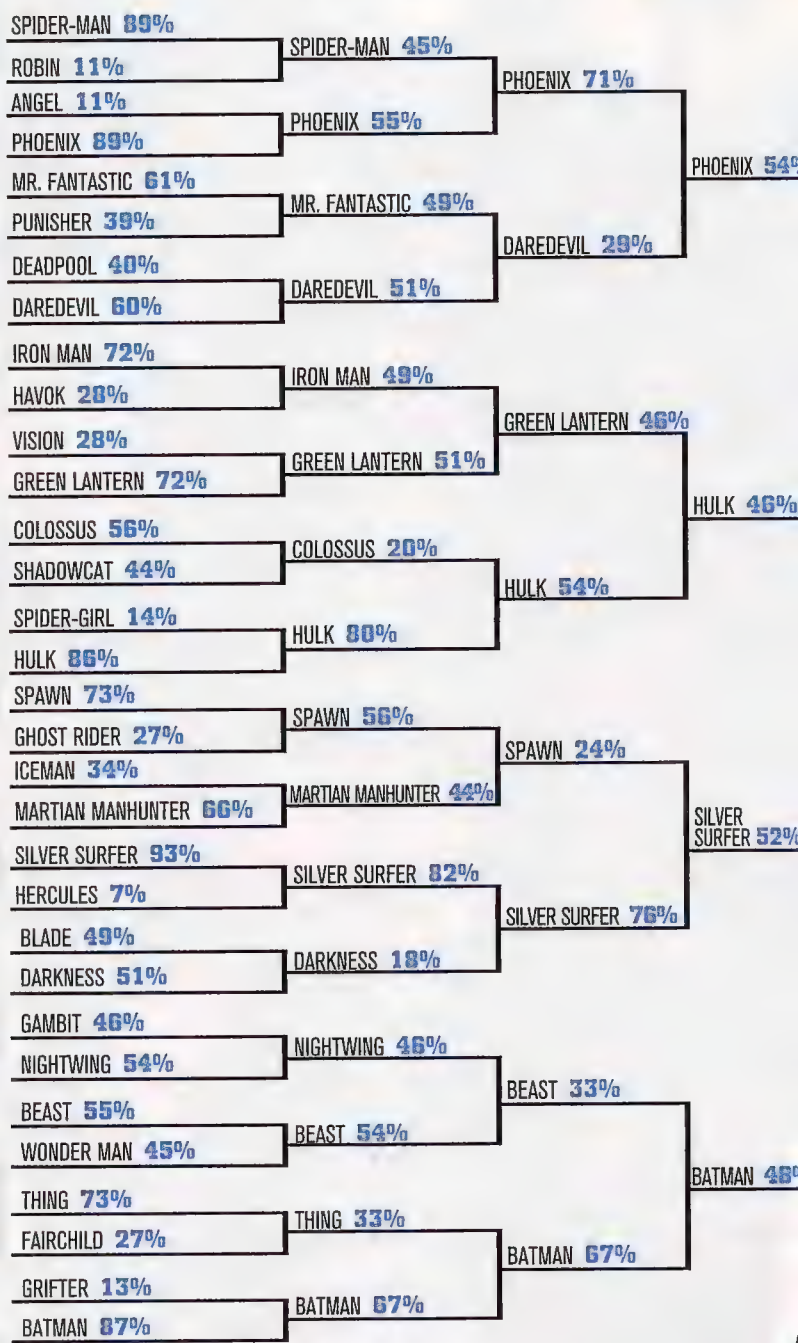
64 heroes duke it out in WIZ

UNBELIEVABLE.

That's the only way to describe the outcome of *Wizard*'s first online superhero brawl, "Superhero Showdown." No one, and we mean NO ONE, even came close to predicting the outcome.

We recruited 64 of the biggest and all-around coolest superheroes around, slapped them into a single-elimination mega-tournament on our wizardworld.com Website and let the fans decide the outcome. In the six-week tourney, tens of thousands of fans cast their votes for each battle, slowly eliminating contestants until only two remained: Phoenix and Thor. (Heavy favorites Spider-Man, Wolverine and Batman never even made it to the Final Four!) It turned out to be one roller-coaster battle of epic proportions, but when the dust settled...the victor carried an uru mallet.

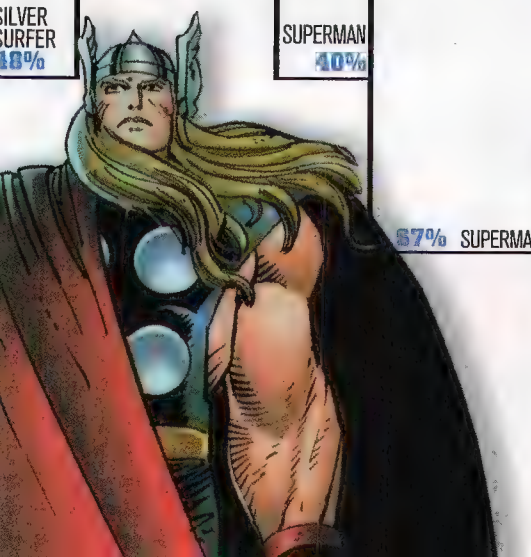
So let's all give Thor a "Yea, verily!" and a deserving flask of mead after a long run to #1. To see how he got there, check out the breakdown at right, complete with major upsets and down-to-the-wire decisions. We'd also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who participated in making the Showdown such a spectacular success. And for those who didn't get in on the action, stay tuned in a few months for *Wizard*'s next mega-brawl, which promises to be...well, quite villainous.



SHOWDOWN

RD's first online mega-brawl

- PHOENIX 52%
  - THOR 57%
    - THOR 60%
      - 41% WOLVERINE
        - 55% WOLVERINE
          - 52% WOLVERINE
            - 93% WOLVERINE
            - 7% HUNTRESS
          - 48% FLASH
            - 32% SAMARITAN
            - 68% FLASH
        - 45% STORM
          - 80% STORM
            - 80% STORM
            - 20% VAMPIRELLA
          - 20% RED MONIKA
            - 45% ABBEY CHASE
            - 55% RED MONIKA
      - 59% THOR
        - 33% ROGUE
          - 54% ROGUE
            - 82% ROGUE
            - 18% GREEN ARROW
          - 46% CABLE
            - 33% X-MAN
            - 67% CABLE
        - 67% THOR
          - 26% WONDER WOMAN
            - 64% WONDER WOMAN
            - 36% SUPREME
          - 74% THOR
            - 22% CAPTAIN MARVEL (DC)
            - 78% THOR
    - SUPERMAN 40%
      - 33% INVISIBLE WOMAN
        - 65% INVISIBLE WOMAN
          - 43% WITCHBLADE
            - 53% WITCHBLADE
            - 47% SCARLET WITCH
          - 57% INVISIBLE WOMAN
            - 37% BATGIRL
            - 63% INVISIBLE WOMAN
        - 35% HUMAN TORCH
          - 52% HUMAN TORCH
            - 52% HUMAN TORCH
            - 48% AQUAMAN
          - 48% NAMOR
            - 66% NAMOR
            - 34% FATHOM
      - 67% SUPERMAN
        - 31% CAPTAIN AMERICA
          - 75% CAPTAIN AMERICA
            - 89% CAPTAIN AMERICA
            - 11% BLACK WIDOW
          - 25% NIGHTCRAWLER
            - 37% HAWKEYE
            - 63% NIGHTCRAWLER
        - 69% SUPERMAN
          - 22% SHE-HULK
            - 39% CALIBRETTO
            - 61% SHE-HULK
          - 78% SUPERMAN
            - 17% SAVAGE DRAGON
            - 83% SUPERMAN
- PHOENIX 43%
- SILVER SURFER 48%

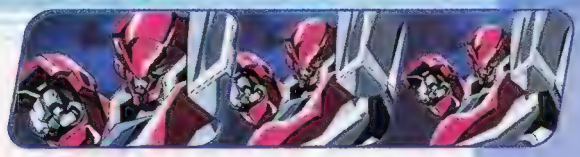


Who loves ya', Baby?!

Nergal Wants You!

In the not-so-distant future, when human colonies sprawl across the surfaces of nearby planets, attackers appear from Jupiter! Overpowered and outmatched, Earth's hopes rest on the newly developed spaceship *Nadesico*. Commanded by the love struck Yurika and her reluctant pilot Akito, the *Nadesico* heads for Mars and destiny!

"The best anime show of all time."
- *Animage*



in stores 11.09.99
DUB $19.98 SUB $29.95

Ghostly Encounters

Those Who Hunt Elves must strip the disembodied spirit of an elf, so Celcia arranges for the group to travel into the spirit world; but that means that they have to leave their bodies behind. And when someone discovers their "corpses", it's only fitting that they should be given a decent funeral.

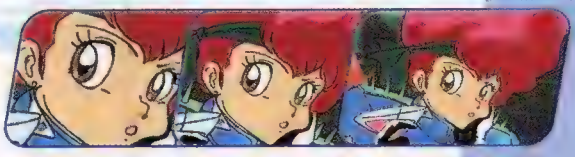
in stores 11.23.99
DUB $24.95 SUB $29.95

"Funny! Damn funny."
- *Ryan's Anime Review Page*

Angels in the Fast Lane

Upon learning that the leader of a new drug ring was once the top candidate at the 3WA training facility, the infallible Central Computer naturally commissions Kei and Yuri to bring her in. Hopped up on muscle augmentation and a bitter grudge, this former Tro-Con is out for blood!

"Classic science fiction slapstick."
- *scifi.com*



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Debugging with a Sledgehammer

Upon discovering that Earth space is still beyond their control the pan-dimensional masters of the matrix are not amused. Their former agents, the seductive Compiler and all too cute Assembler, are occupied with the unforeseen pitfall of human relationships. A new program is needed. Just as beautiful and twice as deadly, White Compiler sets out to destroy her flawed prototype.

in stores 11.09.99
DUB $19.98 SUB $29.95

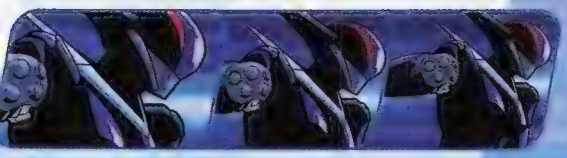
What a fun series! A+"
- *Anime News Network*

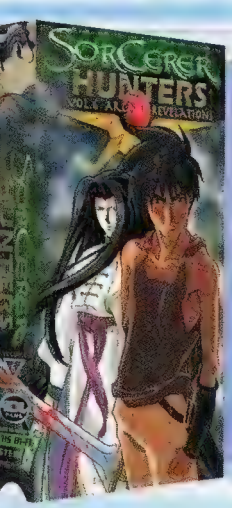
Trial By Fire

Face to face with the automated insanity of a mad boomer, the newest of the Knight Saber learns the limit of her hard suit in a traumatic exchange of mechanical fury. A bloody street battle with the AD Police is the only way out as, trapped in a maze of intrigue carefully laid by conspiring foes, the vigilante heroines fight to survive.

in stores 11.23.99
DUB $24.95 SUB $29.95

"Extraordinary!"
- Gamer's Republic



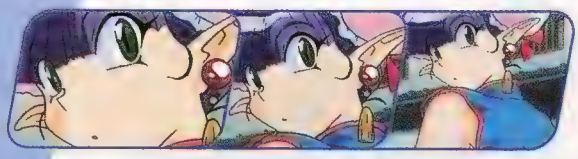


Arcane Revelations

The boundaries between reality and fantasy disappear completely when the *Sorcerer Hunters* are trapped inside an enchanted book where anything that can possibly happen does. The secret desires of the team work against them as they reluctantly struggle to find a way out of a world they don't really want to leave.

in stores 12.07.99
DUB $24.95 SUB $29.95

"Another quality series from ADV Films. Full of cool action."
- Gamer's Republic



Blood Ties

On the slow boat back to Shanghai, Inaho and company encounter a mysterious figure from Mosquiton's past. She's beautiful. She's seductive. She's Mosquiton's wife?! Plagued by the incessant sun of a holiday cruise, the genial vampire faces the horrific splendor of Inaho's unbridled jealousy in *Master of Mosquiton 2!*

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"...an unquestionably awesome show."
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KILLER I

BOOK OF WIZARD 2000

BY SCOTT BRICK

NSTINCT

Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon fire up THE book of 2000, as the Punisher readies to mow down the competition

The new millennium won't be starting with a bang. It'll be more of a ratta-tatta-tatta-tatta.

Sure, it's hard to believe but Frank Castle, a.k.a. The Punisher, returns with a vengeance. The most overexposed hero of the '90s, the Punisher once rode high on *three* monthly titles and countless gimmicky guest appearances. But the far-from-gun-shy vigilante who declared war on criminals after his family was accidentally mowed down by the mob eventually began missing his mark with fans and faded into obscurity. Then came the ultimate low blow—last year's mini-series that saw him take his own life and return to Earth as...a demon-hunting angel.

Things certainly look up for our skull-wearing hero in early 2000, as a new Marvel Knights 12-issue mini-series sees the dream team of Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon pump new life into the Punisher.

"He doesn't think twice about killing people," says Ennis. "That's more rewarding than writing superheroes with this sort of corn-ball morality. The Punisher cuts through all that. He's the kind of character I like to write."

Trust us, *Punisher* won't be just another good book. It'll blow the competition away. Here's why:

BACK TO BASICS

Demon-hunter with ectoplasmic bullets? Forget about it.

"We're not going to be doing any of that," says Ennis flatly of last year's attempted makeover. "We're going back to basics. He's a cold-blooded son-of-a-bitch, who kills criminals because he hates the fact that they're alive. He's not out for redemption in any way, he just does what he does."

BLOODBATH

Prepare for a serious body count. After all, Ennis and Dillon reinvent the word "violence" on a monthly basis in Vertigo's *Preacher*. Expect the Punisher to quickly reclaim his position as comics' Biggest Bad-Ass.

"He doesn't worry about the superhero code of ethics," says Ennis. "He's a massive thug who machine-guns people, then he machine-guns some more, then he's got an hour free so he goes to find some drug dealers and machine-guns them."

DEADLY GRIN

In Dillon's hands, the Punisher looks like a time bomb one tick away from going off. He plans to keep things realistic, emphasizing the Punisher's non-superpowered status in a costume-filled world. "Keeping these characters inherently bloody while also keeping it bloody realistic is something Garth and I tend to have a knack for."

KILLER PLOTS

After a quick set up (explaining what the heck happened when Frank had angelic powers), expect the Punisher to cross paths with hitmen, Daredevil, the N.Y.P.D., would-be vigilante imitators and an all-new female villain who'll quickly become a major thorn in his side.

"There's going to be flame-throwers, machine guns, shotguns, grenades, rocket launchers...the usual arsenal," says Ennis. "Pushing people under subway trains and throwing them to the polar bears in Central Park Zoo. Throwing guys off the top of the Empire State Building. These are the adventures of a bad bastard, a cold-hearted motherf---er."

GIMME A RED

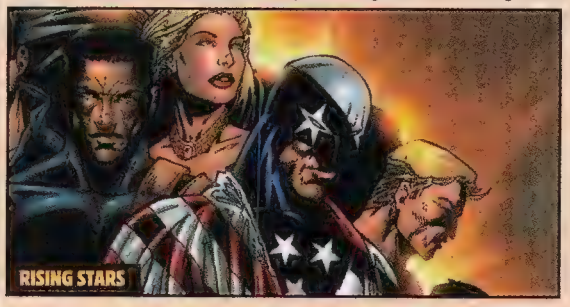
So if red's your favorite color, then trust us, *Punisher*'s your book.

"I think it's safe to say," says Ennis, "that Marvel's streets will be fairly red before we're through."

California-based freelancer Scott Brick punishes himself every night. He chains himself to the couch and watches "Love Boat" reruns.

A RUN FOR THE MONEY

Yep, *The Punisher* is locked and loaded as THE book of 2000...but it certainly won't be easy. Fans have already been whipped into a frenzy over artist Keu Cha's dynamic pencils and "Babylon 5" creator J. Michael Straczynski's compelling dialogue on Top Cow's *Rising Stars*, with no sign of it slowing down anytime soon. The Punisher better start packin' extra heat. It's gonna be a firefight.



HERO SANDWICH

WIZARD *unveils the ultimate marketable hero for the 21st century*

By the Wizard *Staff • Illustration by Pat Lee*

It'll make you a millionaire and have hundreds of prepubescent boys laying awake at night wishing they were you. No, it's not scoring with Jennifer Love-Hewitt. It's making "the next big thing." Darth Maul. Pokémon. Pat Buchanan. These fictional characters have made millions of dollars for their owners and they all followed one simple rule: have a gimmick.

And these money-makers aren't so tough to make. Give 'em a fresh look. Use clever gadgets. Have it make a squeaky noise when you squeeze it's head. It's so simple that we here at *Wizard* are going out on a ledge and unveiling our very own cash-cow for the next millennium. Better still, we're gonna show you how we made 'em so you can follow in our footsteps and hang with us on the beach when you make your fortune too.

DARTH MAUL
So what if he had the lamest death scene in film history? Darth Maul licensing proved so menacing after starring in a $400 million grossing movie, he even has his own toothpaste.

WITCHBLADE'S ARMOR
Pam Anderson. Raquel Welch. Marylin Monroe. They all support the timeless adage: boobs sell. Witchblade carries comics' most popular set. . .and she's being primed for a prime-time TV debut.

SUPERMAN LOGO
Superman may be as American as downloadable porn, but ask someone in Japan if he knows what that big, red "S" symbol means and he'll say, "Hai!"

X-MEN BELT BUCKLE
See this X-symbol? Get used to it, 'cause next summer's "X-Men" movie'll plaster it all over the consciousness of America. It don't hurt that it's been symbolic of comics' best-selling franchise for 20 years.

THE ROCK'S TATTOO

If you can smell what the Rock is cookin', it ain't that burrito he had yesterday. It's the sweet smell of success 'cause pro wrestling and anything related to it has grown as huge as Rock's ego. It's even invaded network TV!

SPAWNY GUY

Wanna have the power to blow 3 million bucks on trivial items? Then your character's gotta have chains and be spawned by ballsy creator Todd McFarlane. Just ask Spawn, who has a $100 million movie franchise, HBO animated series and top-selling comic book.

RANDY "MACHO MAN" SAVAGE'S TASSELS

Ohh, yeeeeeah! Like everything in the cyclical nature of pop culture, if 1980s-style tassels can make a wrestler like Randy "Macho Man" Savage a champ and Slim Jim shill, they're bound to make a comeback.

MANGA-STYLE

Pokémon proved one thing: manga and anime bank beaucoup bucks. This billion-dollar Japanese import style has even invaded American comics thanks to deadline-challenged super-artist Joe Madureira. We're still waiting for him to help finish off this boot...

WOLVERINE'S CLAWS

Hey, Wolverine's the best there is at what he does. And what this furry pug does best is pop his trademark claws to shred the competition as comics' hottest hero for two decades running, bub.

HERO OF WIZARD 2000

Si
appe

NAMES SELL.

Alan Moore. Joe Madureira. Kurt Busiek. Attach any one of these monikers to a project and you're practically guaranteed instant fan-following before issue #1 even hits the stands. They're today's hottest writers. Fan-favorite artists. Comics' biggest stars.

Yet most of these guys all started out the same way—as relative unknowns, just trying to make a name for themselves. Well, guess what? It's exactly the same with tomorrow's guys, the A-list creators of the 21st century. The guys whose names you'll soon be reading with familiarity in *Wizard*'s "Top Ten Hottest Writers and Artists" list every month are currently toiling in the trenches of the comic industry, just waiting for the day when *their* names can sell a book.

So who are these go-getters? These future big shots? You've already met them. You just don't know it yet.

The next MICHAEL TURNER

KEU CHA

Even in water, Michael Turner burns. After taking the industry by storm on Top Cow's *Witchblade*, the popular artist jumped ship after an extremely successful 25-issue run to create the red-hot aquatic comic *Fathom*. Sure, drawing half-naked, gorgeous woman would turn anyone's head, but Turner's action shots and layouts are every bit as exciting.

Turner cites Cha's page layouts as just one of his primary strengths, abilities that continually surprise Turner considering Cha's newness to the field. "He's really good with structure," says Turner with admiration. "His characters are put together very well. His rendering's very clean."

As *Rising Stars* soars up the charts, Cha's fanbase continues to explode. He's not a household name yet, but don't expect that to last for long.

The next **MADUREIRA** and **BUSIEK**? WIZARD picks six of the 21st century's superstar creators.

by Scott Brick

Just ask Turner.

"He's going to be *really* good," says the *Fathom* artist. "He's got a lot of potential. There's a lot of people here at Top Cow that are going to be good at helping him too. I'm really looking forward to his success because he's going to have a lot of it."

CHA CHA Forget "Dance Fever." Keu Cha's burnin' up the charts with *Rising Stars*.

The next KURT BUSIEK

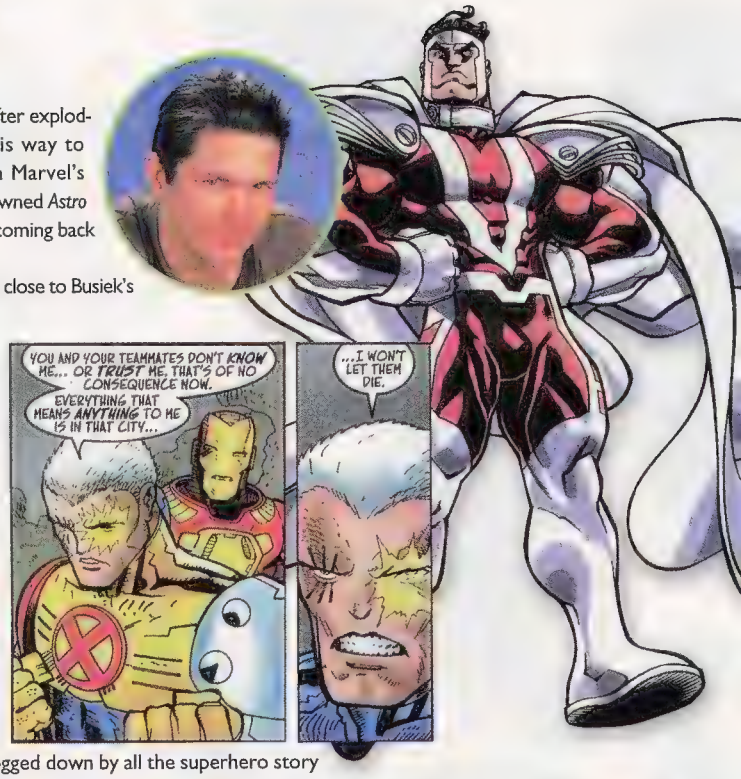
JOE CASEY

Today's most popular writer? Kurt Busiek, hands down. After exploding on the scene with *Marvels*, Busiek soon found his way to megastardom thanks to his character-driven work on Marvel's *Avengers*, *Iron Man* and *Thunderbolts*, as well as his creator-owned *Astro City*. Busiek's down-to-Earth, street-level stories keep fans coming back month after month.

Out of today's stable of writers, the only one who comes close to Busiek's passion at character-centric books is Joe Casey. He transformed *Cable* from an over-the-top caricature of himself into a very real, utterly human character. Now with his work on Marvel's *Deathlok* and *X-Men: Children of the Atom*, as well as WildStorm's *Mr. Majestic*, Casey's poised to be the next hot writer, taking characters that haven't received much attention recently and turning them into fan-favorites.

"I think Joe's terrific, he's a real up-and-comer," says Busiek of Casey. "*Deathlok* #1 is the best first issue I've seen from Marvel in a long, long time. I thought it was completely engaging and it made me want to have the next issue right then and there. Not because I'm dying to know what happens—I'm too old and jaded for that—but because of the craft, the way the story was told, the confidence and casual self-assurance of it."

According to Busiek, Casey's primary strength is his ability to handle characterization without letting it get bogged down by all the superhero story elements. "He knows when to let the characters breathe," says Busiek. "In *Cable*, for instance, he balanced the action and conversation stuff, which I would have been tempted to rush through to get to the rest of the action. He's confident enough to let it relax, to let it breathe, to let it unfold slowly enough so you get those all-important beats of emotion and reflection. His people come across as more natural, because his pacing is so organic. The strings don't show."



REGULAR JOE Sure, he can write Cable (left) and Mr. Majestic. But would you buy a car from this guy?

The next JOE MADUREIRA

PAT LEE

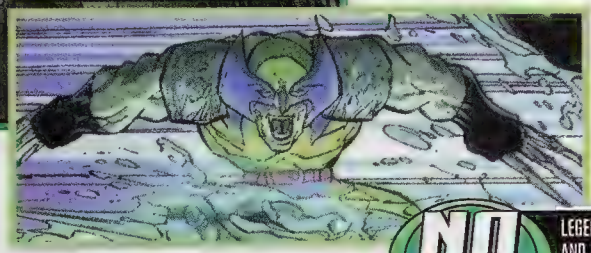
Lots of guys tried importing Japan's manga style to American comics in the '90s, but it was Joe Madureira's *Uncanny X-Men* run that clicked. Suddenly, mega-popular American characters were being done in an over-the-top Japanese manner that left X-fans panting for more. Madureira may have moved on to his creator-owned *Battle Chasers*, but fans are still clamoring for manga-influenced comics. The next logical step? Importing yet another Asian mainstay: anime, the popular Japanese animation style seen in such films as "Ghost in the Shell" and "Neon Genesis Evangelion."

Enter Pat Lee, whose recent work leaves him poised to be next century's Joe Madureira.

Lee's *Darkminds* mini-series is a noir-ish crime thriller with a heavy dose of science fiction. Picture "Blade Runner" colliding with "Akira." Its sleek visuals and brooding colors are heavily influenced by Japanese anime, yet unlike the manga style, *Darkminds* is often brutally realistic rather than cartoony or over-the-top. Case in point: the serial killer Paradox leaves messages carved into human torsos, while exploding eyeballs and bullet-riddled corpses get left in his wake.

Darkminds clearly caught on, as Marvel Knights' Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palimiotti tapped Lee to lend his anime-influenced style to a mini-series featuring two legendary characters in *Wolverine/Punisher: Revelation*. And now that Lee's Dreamwave Studios has released yet another anime-influenced book, the *Darkminds* spinoff series *Neon Cyber*, it looks as though the anime style could be the next big trend in comics. And when it hits, Lee's the man.

BEAUTY & THE BEAST Lee's *Darkminds* (above) sliced open the door for *Wolverine/Punisher: Revelation*.



NO JOKE! LEGENDARY HORROR ARTIST BERNIE WRIGHTSON DID DESIGN WORK FOR "THE FACULTY" AND "GHOSTBUSTERS."

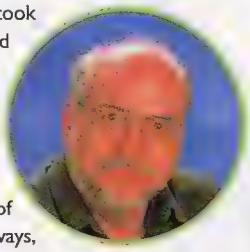
STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS

CASEY, LEE AND STRACZYNSKI PHOTO BY PAUL SCHRADI; CHA PHOTO COURTESY TOP COW.

The next KEVIN SMITH:

J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI

Kevin Smith had it all backwards. As a huge comic book fan, he got into movies so he could break into comics. After building a Hollywood name for himself with films like "Clerks" and "Chasing Amy," Smith jumped onto the comics map with his *Clerks* one-shots and *Jay and Silent Bob* mini-series for Oni Press. His cerebral, street-level stories on *Daredevil* have transformed the character from also-ran hero to Marvel Knights' flagship title. These days, comic shop owners can't keep enough Smith material in stock. He's a full-fledged, multi-media phenomenon, a master of several genres of storytelling. And now…well, he's got some competition.



J. Michael Straczynski's the guy who took the TV world by storm when he proposed a radical new concept: a weekly syndicated science fiction series that would end after five years. True to his word, despite developing a cult-like following among its fans, Straczynski ended "Babylon 5" after five seasons instead of drawing it out for more money. In many ways, with its beginning, middle and ending, "Babylon 5" was a novel for television.

Now the writer's taking his successful formula to comics with Top Cow's latest sensation, *Rising Stars*. In what is essentially a five-year-long mini-series, *Stars* depicts a wave of superheroes that spring up after a meteor strikes Earth. Despite their awesome powers, Straczynski manages to keep *Stars'* superheroes utterly human and completely engrossing. After just a few issues, it's clear that the strengths Straczynski displayed on "Babylon 5"—engaging dialogue, mortal heroes and intriguing storylines—are all evident in *Rising Stars*. And fans are definitely noticing, helping shoot *Stars* to the top of the charts.

With a cult-TV audience following Straczynski over to comics and a comics audience enthusiastically meeting him for the first time, Straczynski's a "Rising Star" all his own.

HOT FOOT A touchy-feely counselor gets his just desserts… *flambé* style.

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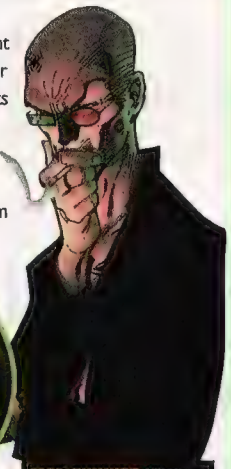
The next ALAN MOORE:
WARREN ELLIS

Writer Alan Moore hates being referred to as a legend, but what else do you call the guy who revolutionized American comics in the 1980s? When he landed on DC's *Swamp Thing*, Moore took a silly character and transformed him into one of comics' most enduring tragic heroes. Then Moore changed the face of comics with the critically acclaimed *Watchmen*, combining complex drama with a dark, foreboding writing style. Currently, he's wowing old and new fans alike with his cerebral pieces on the DC imprint America's Best Comics.

Warren Ellis, similar to Moore, has blown fans away with the brilliant plots he's hatched on *The Authority*, *Planetary* and *Transmetropolitan*. Whether he's tackling mainstream superheroes for WildStorm or outlaw journalists in the Vertigo realm, Ellis' plots are things of complex beauty. In terms of raw imagination alone, Ellis is clearly next century's Alan Moore.

"Warren's a very intelligent and inventive young man," says Moore. "I think his comic work is amongst the very best mainstream work at the moment. Warren has a galloping imagination, which is, to my mind, one of the prime requirements for anybody in this field."

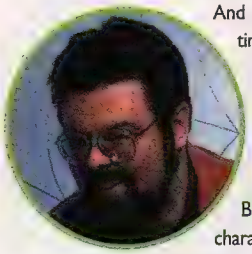
The scary thing about Ellis is, if he's so inventive now, how brilliant is his work going to be down the line, after he's honed his craft for a few years? "Warren has got imagination in spades," says Moore. "He's one of the best writers in the mainstream at the moment and I look forward to seeing what happens in the future. Give him five years, 10 years, I'd love to see where Warren is going."



MAD THINKER Y'know, *Transmetropolitan*'s Spider Jerusalem is one of Ellis' more normal characters.

The next BOB HARRAS:
TOM BREVOORT

Bob Harras personifies power. The Marvel Comics editor-in-chief spent years as the X-Men group editor, guiding Marvel's merry mutants into comics' biggest franchise of the '90s. And he's done it by nabbing the right guys for the right project. After long-time X-writer Chris Claremont's departure, Harras picked guys like Fabian Nicieza, Scott Lobdell and the Kubert brothers to keep the mutants on top. Now, other editors are following in his footsteps. Tops on the list? Tom Brevoort–comics' next big-time editor.



Brevoort's already editing some of Marvel's core superhero titles: *Avengers*, *Thor*, *Thunderbolts* and *Hulk*, all to critical acclaim and sales increases. Brevoort's got a flair for handling Marvel's most iconic characters, and fans and creators alike have started taking notice.

"I think Tom is one of the best editors we've got," says Harras. "He's probably one of the best in comics. He understands the essentials of Marvel characters and he lives and breathes them."

Similar to Harras, Brevoort's got a talent for assembling stellar talent, with names such as Kurt Busiek, George Pérez and Dan Jurgens all working on his books. Brevoort's editorial flair and passion for these classic characters acts like a magnet around the comic industry's heaviest hitters.

"I think [Brevoort's] enthusiasm for these characters really clicks with creators," Harras said. Together they have a lot of fun, and you can certainly see it in the books."

TEAM PLAYER Brevoort excels at assembling creative teams, like the *Avengers*.

California-based freelancer Scott Brick could very well be the next century's Urkel.

ELLIS PHOTO BY STEPHEN ELLISON, BREVOORT PHOTO BY PAUL SCHIRALDI.

no bed of roses

So you want to be a comic pro, huh? All the glamour, the money, the babes, the fame. Well, it ain't all silver linings, y'know. There's a high price to pay for success. Here's what some of today's hottest stars remember about their most horrifying experiences.

BOB HARRAS

"I was just a junior editor when [late Marvel editor] Mark Gruenwald said I had to sing the themes from those Marvel '60s shows at the San Diego convention. I remember staying up all night worrying frantically, saying I don't want to do this. But Mark, who I love to death, would not let me out of it. And sure thing, the next day, I embarrassed myself to the point where I turned bright red. [*Laughs*]"

MICHAEL TURNER

"Staying up 52 hours in a row was pretty bad, trying to finish *Witchblade* #2. I started hallucinating because I'd been up for so long. It was really weird. I had a blanket over me because I was shaking. I was seriously seeing and hearing things. That's about as bad as it gets."

ALAN MOORE

"I don't go to conventions anymore because it was all a horrible experience to me. During the *Watchmen* boom, all I can remember of an entire convention is sitting in a bleak hospitality room, miserable, because I couldn't go out without attracting a mob. At the San Diego convention one year, I woke up screaming from a dream of clutching hands."

JOE MADUREIRA

"Well, *Wizard* once made me do this photo shoot with Mike Turner where we were boxing [*Wizard* #89]. That was a horror, totally embarrassing. When we did the Cliffhanger shoot [*Wizard* #78], they actually wanted us to dress up in graduation caps and gowns, but I totally wouldn't do it. I was way too embarrassed. [*Laughs*] Pretty much all the horror stories in my life come from *Wizard* photo shoots." ■ SB

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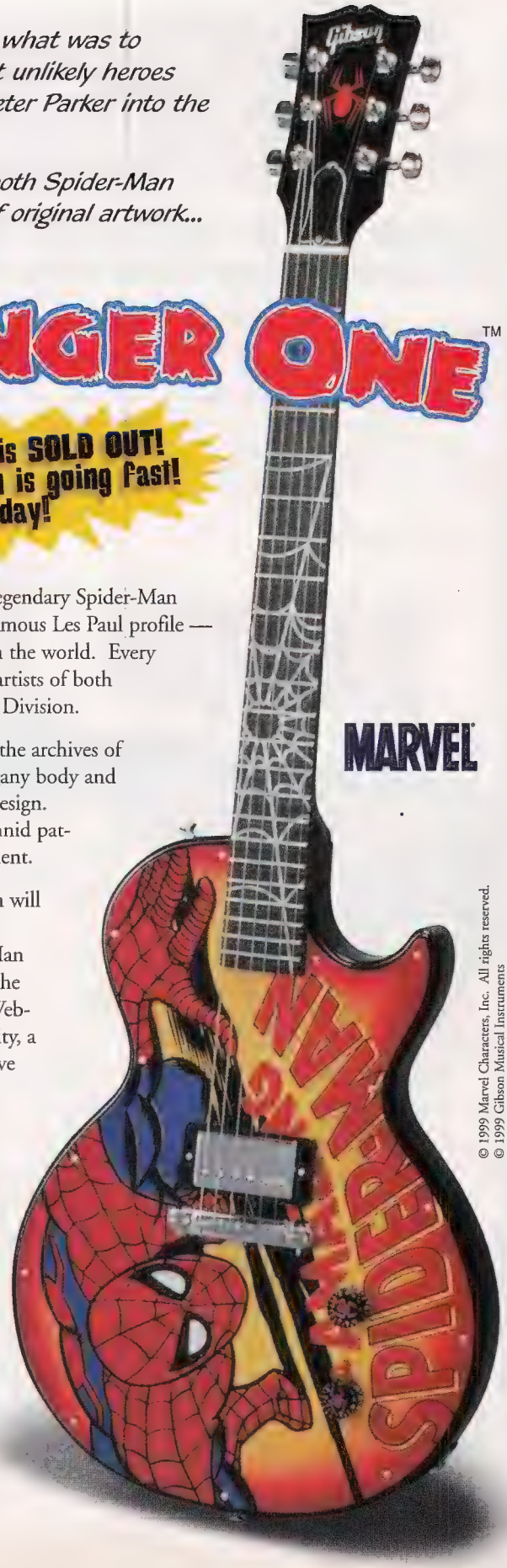

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PORTFOLIO 101

Wanna be a superstar artist of the 21st century? Get that first job by wowing editors with a winning portfolio.

So you draw a mean Wolverine. You can draw him mopping the floor with Magneto. You can even draw him having an International Coffee moment with Gambit at a quaint French bistro. But how do you convince the editors at Marvel or DC that you're the best thing to happen to Wolverine since adamantium? Simple—put together a winning portfolio.

A portfolio is a bound sampler of the best work you have to offer. It's your calling card, résumé and the most lasting impression you can make on an editor. *Wizard* took the time to humanely dissect a portfolio down to its most essential elements and consulted some of the biggest and brightest artists and editors in the industry to help you build a portfolio that'll have the publishers clamoring for your artistic genius.

By Jennifer Moore

LOOK SHARP A black "professional portfolio" looks nice, but isn't essential. "Just make sure your portfolio's easy to carry, easy to place on an editor's table and easy to flip through," says *Catwoman* artist Jim Balent.

ALL IN ALL "You have to show that you can draw everything," says DC Executive Editor Mike Carlin. "City streets, cars, buildings, ugly and beautiful people, all in a five-page sequence."

PENCIL PUSHER Sequential art should take up the bulk of your portfolio. Most editors agree that six pages would suffice.

3-PEAT Joe Quesada, penciler of *Daredevil*, suggests that pencilers include three short, self-contained stories, each being three pages long. He recommends displaying diversity by focusing on three types of protagonists in each story: 1) an individual hero, 2) a team of heroes, and 3) non-super-characters in normal, everyday situations.

SPEECHLESS "I want to be able to look at these pages and not need word balloons for me to understand what the artist is trying to convey in the story," says Quesada.

INK WORKS For a budding inker, don't ink over your own pencils. "It becomes difficult to tell whether an artist's weakness is in his penciling or inking," says *Avengers* editor Tom Brevoort. Contact the submissions editor about getting sample pencil pages, or team up with an aspiring penciler you know. (Make sure you have a photocopy of the original pencils for comparison.)

DULY NOTED When someone's critiquing your work, make sure you scribble down the feedback. It will help you later to keep track of your artistic strengths and weaknesses.

ARTIST OF WIZARD 2000

COLOR MY WORLD "We look for people who have a color sense that also tells a story," says Carlin. "If you cut back and forth between close-ups of faces, without backgrounds, you should realize that you've changed scenery solely by the change in colors."

COLOR-FULL Like inkers, colorists should never color over their own inks, and should display the original inked page next to the colored version.

LEAVE ME Whenever you show your portfolio to a potential employer, "leave behind" a photocopied pamphlet of your work, including your name, address, phone number and e-mail.

SINISTER PLOT Work off a published script. Simply drop a line and S.A.S.E. to the publisher's submissions editor, who'll send you a segment of a published script. (Or view some pro scripts and plots on wizardworld.com) It's easier for an editor to evaluate your pencils. "When someone comes up with a story themselves, they're naturally going to play to their strengths," says Brevoort. "If they don't know how to draw cars, they won't plot cars into their sequence."

SHOW ME Having items like pencils and tracing paper can enhance a portfolio review, says Brevoort. "If I'm going to illustrate a point quickly, I can slap a piece of tracing paper down on someone's work and show them what I'm trying to explain."

DO'S AND DON'TS

Get the most outta your portfolio review

DO go to comic conventions. Since many publishers hold portfolio reviews at cons, it's the best opportunity for you to meet editors face-to-face and get valuable commentary on your work.

DON'T bring friends/family/loved ones to a portfolio review. Consider a portfolio review as a job interview. You don't bring friends along to them, do you?

DO be aware of time constraints. Editors reviewing portfolios have a time limit and must see as many as they can in the time allotted. If the editor is short with you, it's because he has other portfolios to look at.

DON'T offer excuses. If Batman's head looks funny, no one wants to hear that you were up late trying to finish up your portfolio. Editors are there to evaluate art, not the stories behind it. Instead, let your work speak for itself.

DO show your best *current* work. Don't sell yourself short by showing work that doesn't convey what you're capable of now. Editors want to be able to hire you based on your current level of work.

DON'T be defensive. Chances are, you're going to hear things about your work you won't necessarily like. Be receptive to criticism and accept the fact that nobody's perfect. Arguing with an editor will only prove to him that you're nowhere near ready for professional work.

DO know your audience. Don't pitch funny animal samples to the editor of *Avengers*. It's a waste of both the editor's time, and your own.

DON'T insult an artist they've already hired. Aside from it making you look like a bitter fanboy jerk, it's also insulting the opinion of the editor whose opinion you're hanging on.

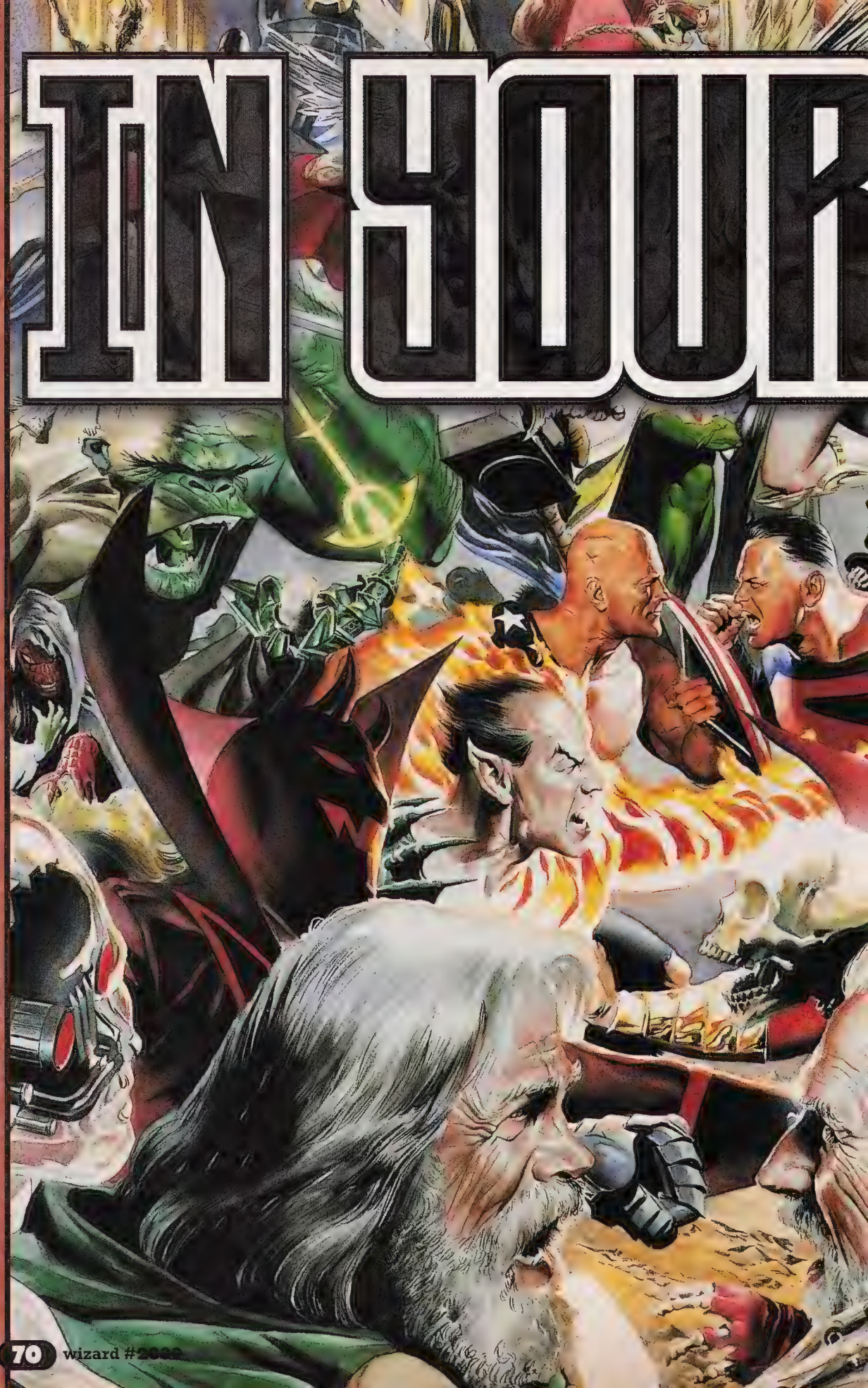
DO take notes. You may not remember everything said.

DON'T take it personally! These editors don't know you and don't have anything against you. If anything, they want to help you improve as an artist so they can hire you someday. If an editor doesn't like your work, it doesn't mean that you're a bad person; it's just one man's opinion.

DO hit the can before your review. Nobody likes looking at someone doing the pee-pee dance.

DON'T keep your lunch in your portfolio. Nothing looks more unprofessional than wiping chicken salad off of your Catwoman pinup. ■ JM

PHOTO BY PAUL SCHRADER


IN YOUR

DREAMS

COMICS' COOLEST PROJECTS YOU'LL NEVER SEE (OR MAYBE YOU WILL)

More. In the end, that's what we all want. Think about it: We comic book fans are *always* hungry for more. We want sequels. And company crossovers. And big, BIG stories.

We want more, even in our dreams. We hope—despite the odds—that Alex Ross will paint a Kingdom Come/Earth X story someday. We want Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons to revisit the world of *Watchmen*. We pray Frank Miller will spin us another *Dark Knight Returns* yarn. And we want the JLA and the Avengers to finally face off in a crossover. Badly.

So what if someone told you there's a "Dark Knight Returns 2" rattling around in Miller's brain...and he's been tempted to write and draw it? Or that Moore has talked about writing a *Watchmen* sequel? It's true. It's in here.

Here are some more tantalizing tidbits: There might be a JLA/Avengers crossover in the works. And Ross has definite thoughts on a Kingdom Come/Earth X crossover.

Hungry? Of course you are. So read on.

But we guarantee it won't be enough. Then again, when is it ever?

BY CHRIS HUTCHINS

WHOA! Wanna know how close this is to happening? Flip the page.

KINGDOM COME/EARTH X CROSSOVER >

CREATOR: Alex Ross, plotter and artist

THE DEAL: Imagine if DC's and Marvel's two post-apocalyptic universes—as envisioned by Ross—came crashing together. The scarred Captain America standing alongside a gray-templed Superman. Jaded heroes of both worlds taking on a threat hell-bent on destroying what's left of their worlds. It would be the ultimate tale of Armageddon: a post-post-apocalyptic battle for not one universe, but two.

Sounds cool, huh?

WILL IT HAPPEN? Not if Ross gets his way. "It would be funny, but that's all it would be," Ross says. "It could never be treated as anything more than that. In fact, if it were given a serious slant in the story, it would hurt the seriousness of both projects."

Ross believes the concepts behind *Kingdom Come* and *Earth X* would be undermined by pairing them together. Fans may be hungry to see it happen, but it won't.

"Even though it may look like a cool idea, the point of even seeing a drawing of it points out the absurdity of it," Ross says. "It's a cool image to see, but to create a plot around it? No, that wouldn't be cool."

BY GEORGE! Even though it's 16 years old, this JLA/Avengers piece by Pérez hints at how great this crossover would be today.

NO JOKE! GARTH ENNIS RECENTLY HANDED IN A SGT. ROCK PROPOSAL FOR DC BUT HAD TO CHANGE IT BECAUSE "SAVING PRIVATE RYAN" HIT THEATERS AND TURNED OUT TO BE THE SAME STORY ENNIS HAD ALREADY WRITTEN.

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS...

A JOKE That's what Alex Ross calls this crossover.

< JLA/AVENGERS CROSSOVER

CREATORS: Kurt Busiek and Mark Waid, writers; George Pérez, penciler

THE DEAL: Nearly 20 years ago, a JLA/Avengers crossover almost saw the light of day. A script was written, and penciler Pérez drew more than 20 pages of the proposed comic. When company politics between DC and Marvel mucked up the works, it looked like all hope was lost for the ultimate superteam crossover.

But word on the street'll give you some hope. Although nothing's been confirmed, rumors are flying that upcoming *JLA* writer Waid and *Avengers* writer Busiek have been talking about bringing Marvel's and DC's greatest heroes in a toe-to-toe crossover.

And—get this—the pair wants it to take place in the pages of *Avengers* and *JLA*. That's right. No mega-company crossovers. No "Age of Amalgam." No continuity-bending gimmicks. Just the JLA and the Avengers slugging it out across their respective universes.

WILL IT HAPPEN? Nothing is official yet, but something's up. Waid and Busiek won't comment on the project. While *JLA* editor Dan Raspler says a crossover like this has a good chance of happening, he adds, "If it was, I couldn't comment on it."

But Pérez, penciler on *Avengers*, says the writers have been planning. The companies' editors are interested. And—because Pérez has always been regarded as the *only* artist on the project—he's ready to go.

Raspler admits there's buzz about the project. "I know this is a project Kurt and [*Avengers* editor] Tom Brevoort would love to do," he says. "It's just a question of getting the companies to sit down together and work it out."

Remember, neither company has officially announced anything yet. But, as Raspler says, it would be a comic fan's dream.

"They're great characters, on both sides of the street," he says. "How great would it be to see an in-continuity adventure where Superman goes up against Captain America in a moral dilemma? Or a Martian Manhunter/Vision confrontation?"

Pérez knows how great. "As a fan, it's terrific," he says. "As an artist, it would give me a sense of fulfillment, a sense of closure. It's almost been 20 years since I drew the first JLA/Avengers story. It would be great to revisit that."

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THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS 2 >

CREATOR: Frank Miller, writer/artist

THE DEAL: At one time, Miller had a sequel planned for his award-winning story that rewrote the book on how Batman could be portrayed. It was going to feature the Caped Crusader and Wonder Woman.

Sound like a good idea? You betcha. But Miller has his priorities. "I'd only do it if I also drew it, and that's not possible now. I'm having the best time in my career with *Sin City*," he told *Wizard* in 1996, *Dark Knight*'s 10th anniversary year. "But you might get a completely different answer from me in a year or two."

WILL IT HAPPEN? Well, it's been a year or three, but there's still no definite word on a sequel from either Miller or Dennis O'Neil, *Dark Knight* editor and current Batman group editor. In the letters column of his creator-owned *Sin City*, Miller has said he doesn't want to go back to superhero comics any time soon. Rumor has it, though, that Miller's had one more Batman tale he's been waiting to tell. Whether it's a *DKR* sequel, no one knows. The cagey Miller's only comment: "Anything is possible."

But if Miller's output on his current *Sin City: Hell and Back* nine-issue mini-series proves anything, it's that *Sin City* is still Priority Number One. It looks like Miller's bought a comfortable home in Basin City...probably near Old Town...and he's not leaving for a while.

MILLER'S CROSSING Pull Batman's finger, 'cause Miller's got a sequel brewin'.

< MARVELS 2

CREATORS: Kurt Busiek, writer; Alex Ross, artist

THE DEAL: Before Ross and Busiek were known as industry powerhouses, they collaborated on *Marvels*, an homage to Marvel Comics' 1960s history. According to Ross, before issue #1 of the acclaimed mini-series had shipped Marvel was already planning a sequel. It was going to focus on the Punisher and a mutant-filled 1970s. Busiek was planned to be the writer.

WILL IT HAPPEN? It already has. But Ross, who created *Marvels*, was never involved. "Truth was, I didn't want to do that '70s stuff," Ross says. "I was ending *Marvels* at exactly the spot where I wanted to be involved. But there was no offer being made there for me to be the follow-up artist, anyway."

Since Marvel was expecting the first series to be a hit, the company wanted a sequel ready to go, Ross says. He was painting *Marvels*, so writer Busiek and another artist were courted for the project. Busiek soon left, citing creative differences. After that, the project plummeted into a quagmire of problems. The poorly received sequel, *Marvels: Code of Honor*, was released in 1997. It was written by *Nightwing* scribe Chuck Dixon and illustrated by several painters.

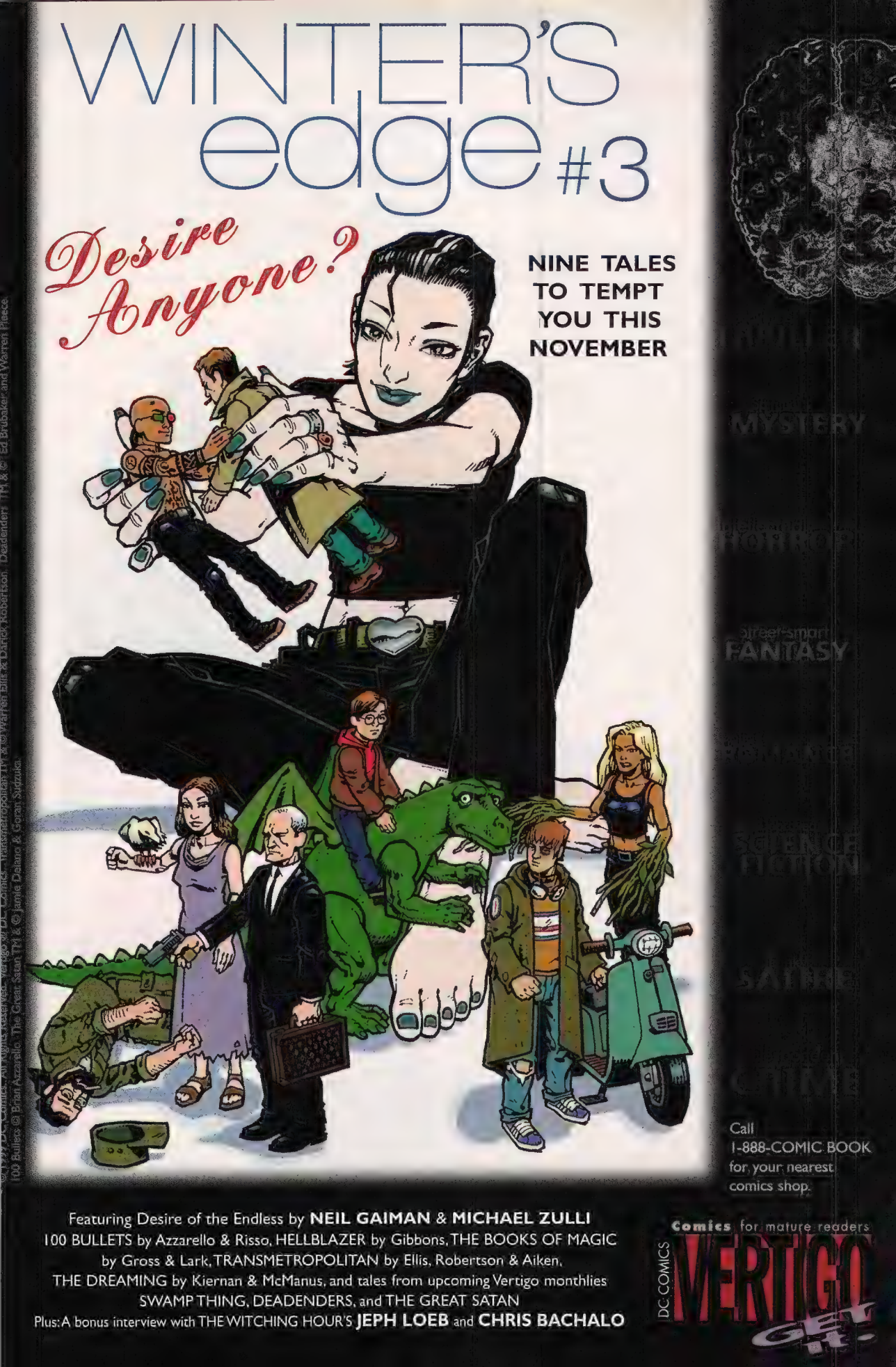
Busiek won't comment on any further *Marvels* sequels beyond saying that "The plot I had is something I can use in *Astro City* [his creator-owned book]. I'm not going to talk about it."

Ross won't take part in any sequel as well. "'Marvels 3' would have to revolve around the last 10 years of continuity, and I haven't been reading Marvel comics in the last 10 years," Ross says. "Doing *Earth X* [Ross' current project] is my way of incorporating everything I love about Marvel history."

HELP! Someone help Spidey find his contact lens, 'cause Busiek and Ross won't.

NO JOKE! KISS ROCKER GENE SIMMONS WROTE FANZINE ARTICLES IN THE '60s UNDER THE PEN NAME 'GENE KING.'

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS.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WATCHMEN 2

CREATORS: Alan Moore, writer; Dave Gibbons, artist
THE DEAL: Think about how cool this would be: A follow-up to *Watchmen*, the gritty, reality-based superhero story that sparked a new generation of readers...and proved you didn't have to be a kid to read comics.

Before Moore left DC Comics in the late 1980s, vowing to never write for the publisher again, he and Gibbons had mulled over ideas for a *Watchmen* sequel. Two mini-series ideas were tossed around—a prequel adventure and a "Tales of the Black Freighter" story—but when Moore bolted from DC, they were both abandoned.

WILL IT HAPPEN? Nope. Royalty disputes over *Watchmen* is what sent Moore packing in the first place. "I think me and Dave Gibbons thought that *Watchmen* was best left where it was," is all Moore will say. But we can still dream...and hear about how it might have been, according to Gibbons.

The prequel project, titled "Minutemen," would have been set in the 1930s and '40s, featuring a younger cadre of *Watchmen*'s heroes. Although no specific plotlines were ever talked about, "Minutemen" would have probably addressed the social climate of that time and examined the heroes' roles in World War II.

Here's the twist: The "Minutemen" story would have been defined by the future events seen in *Watchmen*. "What we would have done is fill in around the plot—concentrating on the tale, rather than the telling," Gibbons says. "The reader would know that the Comedian would grow up to be this fearsome, nasty, dirty-tricks guy, for instance."

Another tentative sequel was a "Tales of the Black Freighter" mini-series, based on the pirate-comic tale told in the pages of *Watchmen*. The stories would have explored moody, dark storytelling.

When Moore left DC, doing a sequel without him was out of the question, Gibbons says. But that didn't stop some editors at DC from thinking about it: "At an editors' retreat, someone made the suggestion they could do some spinoff series, like 'Rorschach's Journal' or 'The Comedian's Vietnam War Diary,'" Gibbons says. "But wiser heads at DC prevailed. They left good enough alone."

Kentucky-based writer Chris Hutchins' greatest unfinished project is "The Official Handbook of the Archie Universe."

WANT MOORE? Sure, as long as it ain't published by DC Comics.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...?

We read 'em, we loved 'em, then we missed 'em. Here are a few comics that, once hot, are now sadly departed.

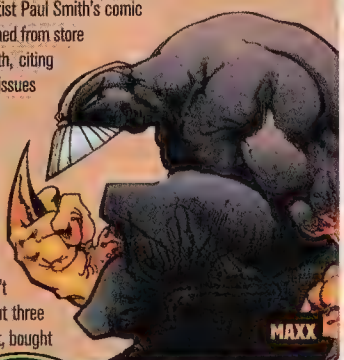
THE MAXX This quirky Image comic spawned its own MTV cartoon and with issue #35 in 1998, then it vanished. "I didn't have any more story to tell," creator Sam Kieth says. "I really needed to stop doing the book; I was more interested in telling stories that had nothing to do with the Maxx." Kieth, working on a *Legs* one-shot for Image, says, "If I do go back to the Maxx, it'll be 10 years later. It'll be when I have something to say."

HELLSHOCK Back in 1996, Jae Lee's creator-owned *Hellshock* sold like hotcakes. Now, it's nowhere to be seen. "Because I was writing it and drawing it myself, I was having a hard time with the story," Lee, currently drawing Marvel's *Inhumans* says. "Because it was so new to me, I didn't know what I was in for. I'd like to get back to *Hellshock* eventually, but it won't be in the foreseeable future."

LEAVE IT TO CHANCE Writer James Robinson and artist Paul Smith's comic about the adventures of a novice occult investigator recently vanished from store shelves. "I fell off the bandwagon for a while there," says Smith, citing difficulties in his personal life. But Smith's currently working on issues #13–#15, which will be released when he has a few in the bag.

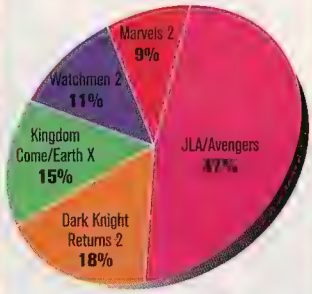
HEPCATS Martin Wagner's indie comic took on topics like alcoholism, suicide and rape. A publishing move to Antarctic Press, a monthly schedule and a large group of *Hepcats* fans made Wagner's future bright. So what happened to the comic?

"I don't know. We've been trying to get a hold of him, too," says Ben Dunn, Antarctic president and publisher. "There doesn't seem to be a way to contact him. He did some work for us about three years ago. Then he was going to do the 13th issue. We solicited it, bought advertising for it, and–poof!–he disappeared." ■ CH



MAKE IT SO

WHAT DREAM PROJECT DO YOU MOST WANT TO SEE?



If there's ever been a blowout in comics, this online poll (www.wizardworld.com) was it. You'd think a Kingdom Come/Earth X crossover would be a fanboy's dream, but the thought of a JLA/Avengers team-up crushed all the competition. One voter said a JLA/Avengers crossover should be removed entirely from continuity so characters could die, and added "let it be epic, not episodic." Sounds good to us. ■ **MIKE COTTON**

NO JOKE! BACK IN THE '70s, ARTISTS BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH, JEFF JONES, MICHAEL KALUTA AND BERNIE WRIGHTSON ALL SHARED A LOFT IN NEW YORK CITY, WHICH BECAME KNOWN AS "THE STUDIO."

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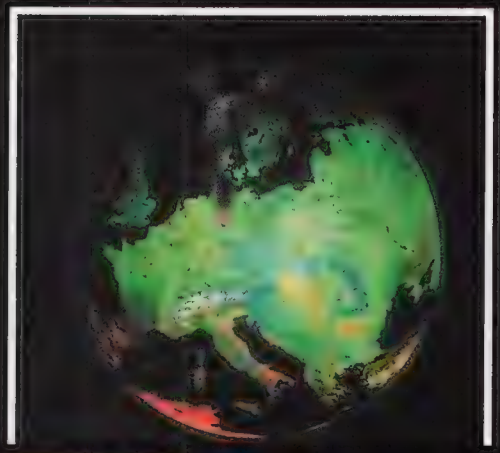
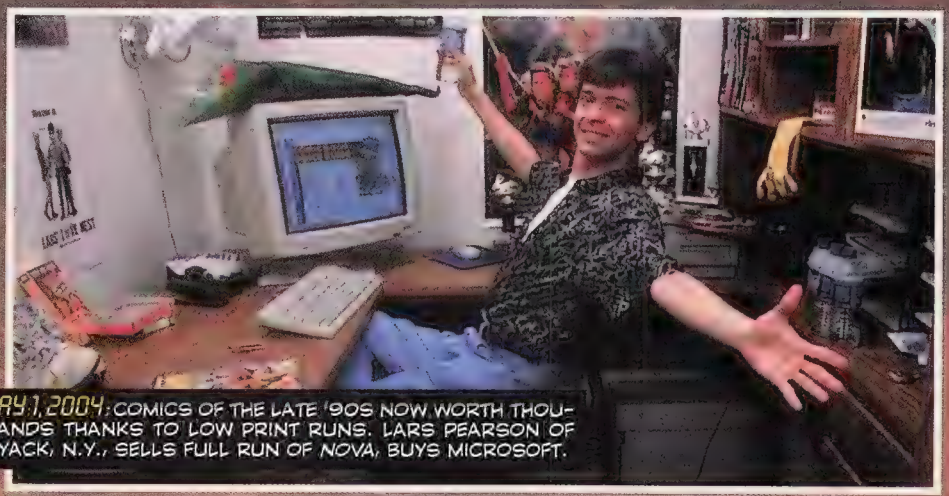
JANUARY 3, 2002 TIME-WARNER CUTS COSTS AND SELLS DC TO TACO BELL. BATCAVE NOW TACOCAVE.



FEBRUARY 11, 2003: WARREN ELLIS, CONVINCED NO ONE CAN KILL SUPERHEROES AS INVENTIVELY AS HE, ATTEMPTS TO APPLY HIS THEORIES TO THE REAL WORLD. GREAT BRITAIN SUBSEQUENTLY TELEPORTED TO AN ANTI-MATTER DIMENSION AND DESTROYED.

MARCH 15, 2003: ALAN MOORE'S BEARD GAINS SENTIENCE, GOES ON RAMPAGE AND CONSUMES OVER A DOZEN BAR OCCUPANTS.

APRIL 20, 2004: WIZARD BUNNY FORCIBLY REMOVED FROM WIZARD ENTERTAINMENT PREMISES, BECOMES NEW NBC NIGHTLY NEWS ANCHOR.



MAY 1, 2004: COMICS OF THE LATE '90S NOW WORTH THOUSANDS THANKS TO LOW PRINT RUNS. LARS PEARSON OF NYACK, N.Y., SELLS FULL RUN OF *NOVA*, BUYS MICROSOFT.

OPENING PHOTO COURTESY OF NASA/SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY/PHOTO RESEARCHERS. BATMAN PHOTO COURTESY OF FOTO FANTASIES. TOM BROKAW PHOTO COURTESY OF EVERETT COLLECTION. EARTH PHOTO BY © TELEGRAPH COLOUR LIBRARY/FPG. BUNNY AND LARS PHOTO BY PAUL SCHRADI.

MAY 10, 2004: GEORGE PÉREZ DRAWS EVERY MARVEL AND DC CHARACTER EVER CREATED ON A GATEFOLD COVER, GOES MAD, BUSTS UP LOCAL ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT SALAD BAR.

JUNE 30, 2005: AIR POLLUTION HAS BECOME SO BAD THE QUESTION "WHO FARTED?" IS ACCOMPANIED BY A PLEASANT SMILE.

JULY 2, 2006: MARK McGWIRE HITS HIS 71ST HOME RUN. TODD McFARLANE DRIVES CAR INTO WALL.

AUGUST 12, 2006: STAFF AT WIZARD REPLACED BY CHIMPANZEES. SALES INCREASE 15%.

BEVERLY HILLS NINJA CAR CRASH PHOTO COURTESY OF FOTO FANTASIES. WIZARD STAFF PHOTO BY PAUL SCHWALDI. MONKEYS PHOTO COURTESY OF EVERETT COLLECTION.

SEPTEMBER 28, 2007: THE X-MEN'S WOLVERINE LAUNCHES NEW MAGAZINE ABOUT COMIC MAGAZINES, PUTS GAREB SHAMUS ON EVERY COVER.

OCTOBER 17, 2009: JIM SHOOTER BEHEADED BY CEILING FAN.

NOVEMBER 5, 2010: JOHN BYRNE'S ALREADY INFLATED HEAD GROWS TO HIDEOUS PROPORTIONS, CRUSHES DOG.

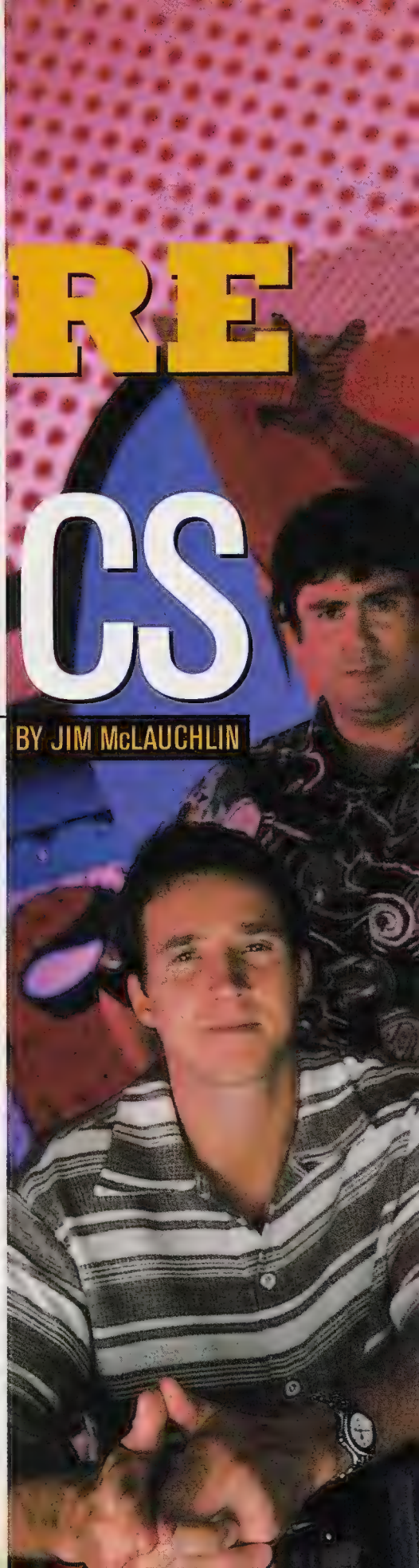
DECEMBER 31, 2011: JOE MADUREIRA FINISHES *FINAL FANTASY XXXII*, GETS TO WORK ON *BATTLE CHASERS* #9.

THE END

THE WIZARD Q&A

the FUTURE of Comics

BY JIM McLAUCHLIN



Kurt Busiek scratches his head and ponders the question. The future of comics...? He looks towards the others and says, "Twenty years from now, we'll be hearing stories where adult fans will be saying, 'Man, I loved those Pokémons I used to get!' We need more opportunities like that."

Michael Turner nods in agreement. Paul Dini and J. Scott Campbell listen attentively. The foursome, elite talents in the comics industry, have come together to debate where comics are heading. In fact, one might say these four, all their talent and diversity, represent the future of comics.

Busiek, the 39-year-old father figure of this comic family, is a 16-year vet who has worked in practically every department of comic publishing from sales to editorial to his current writing on *Avengers* and *Astro City*. He speaks in the calm, measured tones of a father figure. The others hang on his every word when he relays a tale about Stan Lee or the history of comic sales.

Twenty-six-year-old J. Scott Campbell, the budding entrepeneur who co-founded WildStorm's ultra-successful Cliffhanger line with his creator-owned *Danger Girl* series, serves as a big brother. Gearing up for his seventh year in the comics biz with potential video game and movie deals in the works, he leans back in his seat, always self-assured. And when he has something to say, it's said with authority.

Paul Dini, 40, has the look of a cool uncle. He changed the way we look at an icon as a writer/producer of the current "Batman" animated series and blazes new trails with a futuristic makeover in "Batman Beyond." A 20-year veteran of the TV industry, Dini has also written comic books for the past six years. His Emmy-winning cartoon work has changed the way many within the comic industry looks at superheroes. He has the respect of the group, but is even more intent as a listener than a speaker. He squints hard when someone speaks, absorbing every word.

Little brother? Meet Michael Turner. The sizzling 28-year-old artist helped define a company three years ago with Top Cow's

PHOTOS BY ROBERT BECK

'Wizard' gathers the Fab Four of comics' elite talents–
KURT BUSIEK, J. SCOTT CAMPBELL, PAUL DINI and MICHAEL TURNER–
for a power-lunch to discuss the future of the industry

"If there's a really great comic book, I cannot get friends to pick it up... For some reason, comic books just turn people off. They think it's a kid's medium."

J. SCOTT CAMPBELL

***Witchblade* and parlayed his firepower into his own series, *Fathom*. Hollywood has targeted both properties to be adapted into film and/or TV. Turner sits on the edge of his seat, always anxious to jump in with an opinion or offer a counter-point to something else said.**

This family gathering, quite naturally, sits around a dinner table—Marvel Mania restaurant, a place über-fan Busiek desperately wanted to visit. Luckily, he got there two business days before it shut its doors for good. So after the one-pound Hulk Burgers and Archangel-Hair Pastas are finished, belts are loosened a notch, toothpicks are chomped, and opinions fly on just what the future will hold in the profession they've all chosen as home.

WIZARD: Before we talk about the future of comics, let's start in the present. Where the heck is comics today?

DINI: It's pretty stagnant as far as business goes. It's not attracting a lot of new readers. But I would say that comics as an entertainment medium are better than ever, because there's amazing diversity. You can find everything from mainstream DC and Marvel titles to [Slave Labor's] *Action Girl*, [Sirius'] *Scary Godmother* and the Hernandez Brothers. There's a wealth of talent.

BUSIEK: The problem is connecting that talent to an audience—publishing the work in a way that's in the right package and distributed and promoted so that the material can reach the audience. The comics form is enormously popular in this culture—everyone knows it. But the comic *book* is not reaching its potential audience.

TURNER: Video games used to be just as obscure as comics are. But now, Sega is hosting the MTV Music Awards. They've hit a mainstream level that I think comics still can, because the content is still great.

CAMPBELL: It's tough as a business. Nowadays, you have blockbuster movies that pack tons of special effects, music, stars and everything. It doesn't seem as interesting to pick up a comic because you can go the theater and hear it and feel it, or you can play a video

NO JOKE! DC COMICS ADDED THE YELLOW OVAL AROUND THE BAT-SYMBOL SO THEY COULD TRADEMARK IT—APPARENTLY YOU CAN'T TRADEMARK A SIMPLE BAT.

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS...

game where you *are* the character. I think those alternate forms of entertainment are just more interesting than comic books.

But *you're* a comic creator, Mr. Campbell. Is that a defeatist attitude?

CAMPBELL: I'm just giving you how the public perceives comics. I personally think that you can achieve a *lot* with comic books. Comics have a completely different feel and format. You can tell stories in panels with different shapes. That's something only comics can do. At a movie, you have the same-shaped panel all the time.

WITCH DO YOU WANT?
Do movies have an unfair advantage over comics?

***[to Campbell]* Better entertainment value: *Danger Girl* #5 or the "Blair Witch Project" movie?**

CAMPBELL: Without being "Oh, poor me," I would say the movie is more. You get sound, movement, actors that pull you in. Also, if there's a really great comic book, I cannot get friends to pick it up, but movies are a format that's acceptable to a mass audience. For some reason, comic books just turn people off. They think it's a kid's medium.

Does America still think comics are Archie and Jughead?

BUSIEK: Somewhat. I think you have to do outreach outside the comic book store. You have to put comics in front of people at a supermarket or bookstore, where potential new readers go. We have to take comics *to* the people, because comic books stores aren't the right tool for new readers.

Back in the early '80s—when I was working in sales for Marvel and you guys were like, toddlers—the huge newsstand successes at Marvel were *G.I. Joe* and *Transformers*. Kids knew the brand already. Those comics lead them to other comics.

CAMPBELL: [*Excitedly*] Yeah! You just nailed the story of how I got into comics—*G.I. Joe*.

TURNER: Top Cow is doing some of that. We did two *Tomb*

DIFFERENT TASTES

HOW DIVERSE IS THIS GROUP? LET'S COMPARE THEIR FAVES AND RAVES.

BUSIEK

Favorite comic hero: "Hawkeye! Whatever team he's on is the best–just ask him!"

Favorite comic villain: "Magneto. Great helmet, great powers, and he had the Toad to beat up on."

Favorite all-time comic story: "The first April Kane story in *Terry and the Pirates*. Go read it, you'll find out why."

Superpower you'd like to have: "Super-agility, just for the fun of it."

Superhero you'd hate to write: "Bishop. That whole future enforcer thing just doesn't interest me at all."

Favorite all-time comic cover: "*Avengers* #75–'Stop Quicksilver!' Just a great image."

Favorite supporting character: "Zelda, the smart-mouth waitress from early *X-Men*. She's just too much fun."

Favorite all-time comic writer: "Milton Caniff. Nobody was better at classic adventure."

Favorite all-time comic artist: "Jack Kirby. Inventive, innovative, powerful–he was the best."

Favorite thing about Marvel Mania: "The cool old Marvel panels on the booth walls. Not the food, that's for sure."

CAMPBELL

Favorite comic hero: "A tie–G.I. Joe's **Snake Eyes** and Batman."

Favorite comic villain: Dr. Doom

Favorite all-time comic story: "*G.I. Joe* #21, the 'silent' Snake Eyes story."

Superpower you'd like to have: "The power to make deadlines!"

Superhero you'd hate to write: "There are so many to choose only one."

Favorite all-time comic cover: "Another tie between Jim Lee's *X-Men* #275 and Art Adams' *New Mutants Special Edition* #1."

Favorite supporting character: "Harley Quinn. Really, Paul–Harley Quinn."

Favorite all-time comic writer: "The highly underrated Larry Hama."

Favorite all-time comic artist: "Arthur Adams, of course!"

Favorite thing about Marvel Mania: "The carpet. It's a pattern of old comic panels. Can I get that for my house?"

Raider one-shots and we actually sold them in Electronic Boutique and Babbage's—two computer software places that *never* sold comics before. And they sold out.

A good segué to get into what publishers do right or wrong these days. How about Marvel?

BUSIEK: I see the company concentrating on other media—getting movies and licensing deals made and making the stuff visible. Marvel is certainly getting their characters noticed with the "Island of Adventure" theme park and the Thing advertised with Dodge vans.

Is that good or bad?

DINI: [*Jumping in*] It's totally right. The more people you get to notice your stuff, the better.

CAMPBELL: A lot of people credited the comic boom in the early '90s to the success of the [1989] "Batman" movie. [*Chuckling*] That kind of exposure sure don't hurt.

BUSIEK: To answer your question, I think that making the stuff more visible is always good. But Dr. Doom's Fearfall doesn't make me want to read comic books. The next step is to make sure that kids who ride Dr. Doom's Fearfall want to read a Dr. Doom comic, and can find one and will consider it worth the money.

TURNER: But if a kid has a good time on the that ride, he's *going* to want the comic. It just has to be a good product. You need a cool story so the book stands on its own two feet.

So does Marvel stand on its own two feet?

TURNER: Some books shine. A handful are just there to fill in behind the logo and keep a title going. Overall, it's a good line of books. Most of the X-stuff is good. You can tell they pay more attention to those. I love *Wolverine*. [Artist] Leinil Yu does *great* stuff.

How about DC comics?

BUSIEK: It is a company that—more than anybody else—publishes comics that maybe aren't doing so well in single-issue form, but can get into trade paperback form where they'll stay in print until they've made a really nice profit. It seems to be aggressively building for the future with a long-term view.

DINI: I think DC's really diversified over the last 10 years to aggressively go and find different readers. It's trying to get younger readers back with their Cartoon Network books. I see Vertigo trade paperbacks sold in Tower Records. I think it's trying to appeal to a more diverse readership.

On the minus side, some of their star characters are overexposed. Do people really want to read Superman five times a month?

CAMPBELL: A complaint I have about DC superhero books is that it feels like there's so much history there. Unless you're hardcore fan, you're not gonna be able to follow if you miss in an issue.

Okay, we have some offenders in the room.

How important is keeping a regular schedule to the future of comics?

[*long pause*]

CAMPBELL: If you're a creator who wants to sell and have your fans, very important. Personally, I feel I'm producing my best work and it's hard for me to stop doing that for the sake of making schedules that were perhaps unrealistic or just a lot of good intentions in the beginning. I think what you'll see in the future is a rethinking of how to market books and schedule them so they're not late.

TURNER: I think that a lot of the success of *Witchblade* came from the fact that it came out regularly, by the same person, when we said it would. I had my troubles on *Fathom* when I did the second *Witchblade/Tomb Raider* one-shot [earlier this year], but I'm back on track. Keeping a real schedule is *so* important.

We've touched on Pokémon already.

Is manga a wave of the future?

DINI: It may bring in kids that are getting into things like Sailor Moon

NO JOKE! NOT ONLY HAS MARVEL PUBLISHED A COMIC ON *MOTHER TERESA OF CALCUTTA*, BUT THEY ALSO PUT OUT *THE LIFE AND TIMES OF POPE JOHN PAUL II*.

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DINI

Favorite comic hero: Uncle Scrooge
Favorite comic villain: The Joker
Favorite all-time comic story: "That one where Uncle Scrooge kicks the Joker's ass. Oops, wait–never happened. Probably 'That's Life' from *Arcade* #3, the great R. Crumb story about the doomed bluesman."
Superpower you'd like to have: "One involving women and money."
Superhero you'd hate to write: "Ant-Man. I dunno why. He's Ant-Man. Reason enough."
Favorite all-time comic cover: "*Justice League* #51, for obvious reasons."
Favorite supporting character: "**Comic Book Guy** from 'The Simpsons.' So surly, so sarcastic, so true to life."
Favorite all-time comic writer: "Will Eisner."
Favorite all-time comic artist: "Ditto."
Favorite thing about Marvel Mania: "That sad-lookin' costume of the Grizzly hanging over the supervillain's bar. I stared at it for five minutes before I figured out what it was."

TURNER

Favorite comic hero: "Superman. He was the first, and even though they gave him that electro thing, I still like him."
Favorite comic villain: "The **Joker**–A bad-ass that doesn't take things too seriously."

Favorite all-time comic story: "The first three-quarters of the 'Superman' movie. Flawless. But the whole turn back time by flying around the world thing...?"
Superpower you'd like to have: "Time control, so I could have more free time and get a life."
Superhero you'd hate to write: "None. I think any character, with some imagination and determination, can be fun to write."
Favorite all-time comic cover: "Anything by Alex Ross. Anything."
Favorite supporting character: "Ernie the Seahorse from *Fathom*."
Favorite all-time comic writer: "Alan Moore. *Watchmen* ruled."
Favorite all-time comic artist: "Hands down, Marc Silvestri. He's also a great teacher and a good friend."
Favorite thing about Marvel Mania: "Storm!" ■ JM

and Pokémon. It may ignite a love for the comics medium which in time may filter into the mainstream. If kids start on manga and discover classics like *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*, I think it's a very good thing.

How about the Internet? Creators like Paul Chadwick and Steve Skroce did Matrix comics solely for the Internet. Stan Lee Media is cooking up something.

DINI: There are people out there doing the experimentation and I wish them good luck because I want to see it take off. Something is going to hit and it's going to hit big. When it does, we're gonna see a new form for comics entertainment come along.

BUSIEK: The great advantages that comics on the Internet have is the fact that you don't have to pay a printing bill, and you don't have to find a comic store to get a comic. We should be using this as much as we possibly can. Something will hit and it will be one more channel for comics, one more way to expose people to the medium.

We've seen Kevin Smith, Bob Gale and J. Michael Straczynski come to comics from writing movies, and with great success. Paul, you've come from TV and done a few comics...

BUSIEK: [*to Paul, in mock anger*] What? Because TV and movies just don't pay enough?

Is this something that will increase in the future?

DINI: I can't speak for other writers out there, but there are many interested in doing comics. It's always been a personal love of mine. When ["Batman and Superman Adventures" Co-executive Producer] Bruce Timm and I were approached by DC and they said, "If you ever want to do a comic, we'd be happy to look at it," we put our heads together and we did the Harley Quinn *Mad Love* comic. I think Bruce would rather be doing comics because he really does enjoy the freedom of creating the whole thing himself. Our career is not there full time, but it's a fun thing to do. We get to experiment and tell different types of stories than on TV.

KING FOR A DAY It would be a tremendous boost to attract a writer such as Stephen King to comics.

CAMPBELL: I think people who like to tell stories like to tell them to the biggest audience possible. So the evolution of the storyteller is to go from a smaller medium to bigger. I don't see more movie guys entering, simply because they want to tell their story to the most people. The exceptions are the guys you mentioned—big fans of comics.

BUSIEK: Yeah, but the reverse of that is that the bigger the medium, generally the less control you have.

Does comics then become a cool playground simply because you guys have more freedom and control?

ALL: Yeah!

CAMPBELL: I think we agree that you have a tremendous amount of freedom when you're drawing something. You don't have to go get a thousand extras if you want to put them into a scene. You just draw them. And you always have an unlimited budget.

What if the comics industry attracted someone like Stephen King to write a comic book or graphic novel?

TURNER: I know [TV producers] got Stephen King to write an "X Files" episode.

DINI: It becomes a big event. It becomes very attractive for the comic book stores and the chain bookstores. If you had Stephen King, a big artist and a big character such as Spider-Man or Superman, you

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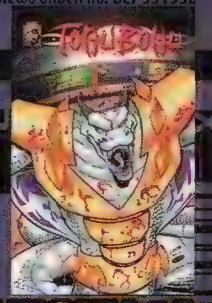

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have marquee value across the board which is the way movies get packaged. That certainly will elevate the visibility of comics, at least for a little while, if you brought in creators like that to take on specific projects. I wouldn't want the entire business to go that way because there are a lot of people doing good work on a daily basis who you don't want to see them tossed aside for favor of guys who are perceived to be tastier.

CAMPBELL: But stuff like that might be a faster way for us bridging those two worlds to possibly being open minded.

BUSIEK: People who are looking for it are going to the graphic novel rack to find for it. They read it. They like it. There are other graphic novels there. They pick them up and they get into it more and more. It's a place for them to start.

Five years from now if we're having this conversation again, what are we talking about and where are we?

BUSIEK: I hope that we're talking about all the different venues that comics are being sold in and all the different places that people can see comics and all the different ones we have still to go.

CAMPBELL: Hopefully we'll all be sitting around going, "Hey! Remember that slump in the late '90s? How'd we come out of that one?"

TURNER: The "Fathom" movie will have been out, and it kicked ass!

DINI: I think things will be better because there are new crops of kids coming up all the time and they really are the lifeblood. Comics to a degree are cyclical, and I think this is just a down cycle. The kids that came along the last few years and bought comics didn't stay with it. But I'm hoping the next generation are the ones that are gonna grow and discover the great things that they can read in the past and also great things coming.

That's why what I would wish for is a strong, steady, slow growth upward in permanent readership of kids who discover comics and embrace them in their youth, carry them through their teens, then to some degree keep some contact with them beyond that.

BUSIEK: My guess would be in five years, trade paperbacks and other backlist stuff is the main source of income for the comics industry, with monthly comics fueling that. The monthlies will produce the new material and the backlist will be this giant mass of wide variety and depth that just keeps selling itself.

TURNER: What I've seen in the last few years at conventions is more of a buzz. Two years ago seemed to me to be the low point in people just being *excited* about comics. Last year was a little bit better, and this year has been better yet. It seemed like some people thought comics was just gonna die. Those people seem to be gone now. Thank God.

How about in terms of creators?

Five years from now, who's the next guy?

DINI: Alex Ross is one of those people who has reached a degree of preeminence in the industry. As long as he wants to stay in comics, he'll contribute in a significant way. I think Greg Rucka [current Batman scribe] is a terrific writer and he's gonna go places.

TURNER: And I think the days of the instant success are gone. Readers are wary because they think, "This might just be the next guy who's gonna draw two issues and go away." The next big names will have to establish themselves and pay their dues. They're going to have to be consistent.

BUSIEK: The next big creator is somebody who hasn't published his first work yet. Or maybe an artist...I think his name is Kaare Andrews. He's doing *Intrigue* at Image which is a nice looking book, but he did a piece in this years *Writers Block Annual* which was gorgeous, gorgeous work. *Intrigue*'s not showcasing what he does best, but when he gets a platform that showcases what he does best I think he's gonna be huge. And with characters, it'll be whatever someone brings a fresh take to. Spider-Man could be revitalized five years from now, or Batman. And let's not forget that DC's best-selling title used to be *Teen Titans*. I would love it if five years from now, the hot book was ['70s DC character] *Kamandi*. I would *love* to read that!

TURNER: Anything could happen. I just think it's important for the three groups—retailers, publishers and fans—to understand the *other* two parts of the comic world. Misconceptions and rifts are created because of lack of communication. If we all took time to solve problems and not just place blame, our "world" would be a much more productive one. I have a lot of optimism. If everyone would treat this industry like it's evolving instead of dying—and I firmly believe that's the case—then we all succeed. Five years from now, I'll be doing everything in my power to make this happen. [*Laughs*] Now you didn't forget to tip the waiter, did you?

Wizard Senior Staff Writer Jim McLauchlin's future involves expensive scotch, cheap women and moderately priced athletic shoes.

CHECK, PLEASE
A COMPLETELY IRRELEVANT TALLY

Just for gags, *Wizard* handed out some goofball awards for such a gargantuan gathering. Here's who, uh, "won":

MOST PUNCTUAL: Photo finish! Paul Dini beat J. Scott Campbell by, like, 20 seconds! But Dini got to come from work, 10 minutes away. Campbell made a three-hour drive. (Hey, at least Campbell made it on time!)

BEST DRESSED: Michael Turner. Classy, yet casual. And he didn't drip anything on his shirt.

CLEAN PLATE AWARD: J. Scott Campbell. The long drive got JSC's hunger up. He wolfed down his barbecue cheeseburger and made short work of the "mutant" chicken wings appetizer.

"OUR LITTLE MICHAELANGELO" AWARD: Paul Dini couldn't stop doodling on the placemats. He did no fewer than three drawings, including Zatanna, Medusa and Jingle Belle.

MOST ASTUTE MENU ANALYSIS: Kurt Busiek. "What? A 'Thor' salad? Thor is *not* a salad! Thor is a hunk of meat, like a haunch of venison or side of mutton. Preferably with a bone sticking out of it!" ■ JM

NO JOKE!

JOE JUSKO'S FIRST PUBLISHED ART WAS A FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER PICTURE HE SENT TO *THE MONSTER TIMES* WHEN HE WAS 12 YEARS OLD. HIS MOTHER MADE HIM LIE AND TELL THE MAGAZINE HE WAS 13, THINKING THEY'D NEVER BELIEVE A 12-YEAR-OLD COULD DRAW IT.

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-VICTOR J. MILLER, SR, USA

"I WAS REALLY (AND I MEAN *REALLY!*) IMPRESSED AND HAPPY WITH THE QUALITY OF THE COURSES."
-THOMAS DEROUAULT, FRANCE

"THANKS AGAIN... FOR PROVIDING A PERSON SUCH AS MYSELF WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN."
-DANIEL BELIC, AUSTRALIA

"I HAVE LEARNED MORE ABOUT PENCILING IN THIS SHORT TIME- THAN IN THE FIFTEEN YEARS I'VE BEEN TRYING TO BREAK INTO THIS INDUSTRY!"
-SANDY CARRUTHERS, CANADA

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CASTING call

WIZARD casts the EARTH X MOVIE!

BY A BUNCH OF WIZARD STAFFERS

With the X-Men movie on the horizon, it finally looks like we're getting the Marvel movie we deserve. So what do we wish for now? How about a universe-spanning, dystopian-future-type movie where the whole Marvel Universe has been turned upside down and nothing is like we remember it? How about an Earth X film?

That's right, Earth X, the possible Marvel future where everyone has been given powers and a new order has arisen to take control of the planet. At its heart, Earth X has everything a good movie should: epic struggles of good overcoming evil in the face of supreme adversity, kick-ass heroes, supremely evil villains and—don't forget—hot babes plus big explosions.

With the multi-million-dollar epic film becoming less and less rare, now is the time for Marvel to capitalize on *Earth X* and bring this huge story to the screen. You can count on our ticket money, guys!

STONE COLD STEVE AUSTIN as **CAPTAIN AMERICA**

The Earth X Captain America fights a lonely battle for the American Dream with only his unbelievable toughness to keep him going. Speaking of being a tough son of a bitch, Stone Cold Steve Austin has been fighting battles in the WWF for years. If this sounds like a great casting decision, give us a "Hell Yeah!" We thought so.

NO JOKE! *JSA* WRITER DAVID GOYER WROTE THE SCREENPLAY FOR THE "BLADE" AND "BLADE II" MOVIES.

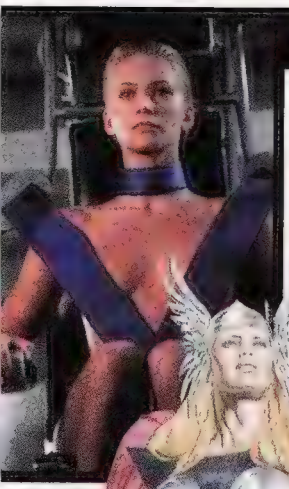
STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS

SEAN CONNERY as TONY STARK

Locked in self-isolation, the last real human on Earth, Tony Stark leads the armored Avengers in a battle to save the world. One-time James Bond Sean Connery ("The Rock") has the fierce look of a determined man with a clear vision for the future.

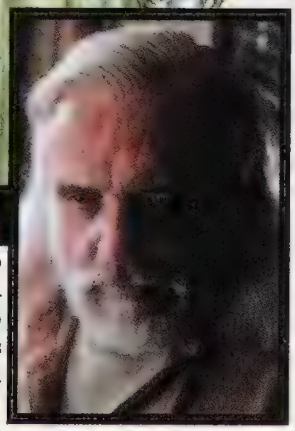
TOM ARNOLD as BEN GRIMM

It's good to see some things never change. The world may be a darker place now, but Ben Grimm is as lovable as ever. Trading one big lummox for another, we vote in Tom Arnold ("True Lies") as the rocky patriarch of the new Fantastic Four.



NATASHA HENSTRIDGE as THOR

It's hard to believe that with her towering stature and devastating looks, Amazonian beauty Natasha Henstridge ("Species") is from Canada and not Asgard. As it turns out, Thor (cursed by Odin to walk Midgard as a woman) is a pretty hot chick him—ahem—herself.



ANTHONY HOPKINS as DR. REED RICHARDS

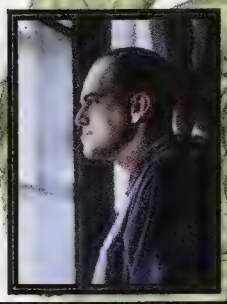
Secluded. Aloof. Tortured. To get into the mind of the "Earth X" Reed Richards, we needed someone who can *act*. The brilliant Anthony Hopkins ("Instinct") would look ginchy in a green cape, dontcha think?

RYAN REYNOLDS as DAREDEVIL

Laughing death in the face has always been the modus operandi of Daredevil. The Earth X twist? This Daredevil (a wise-cracking circus performer) can't die. Sitcom "Two Guys, a Girl, and a Pizza Place" is a real buzz-kill, yet Ryan Reynolds cracks jokes left and right...speak of the devil.

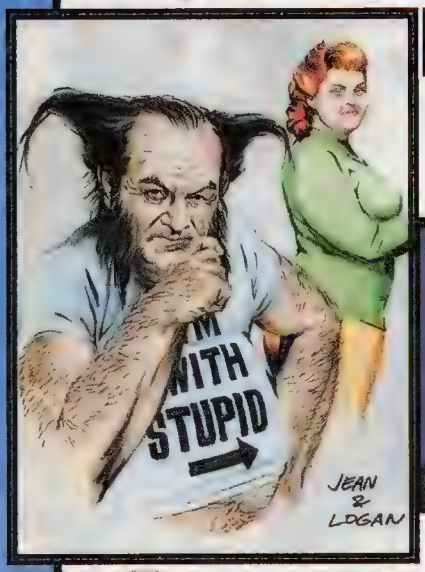
KRISTEN JOHNSTON as SORCERESS SUPREME

The student is now the master. Dr. Strange's once-disciple (and lover) Clea has not only grown into the world's top sorcerer but also into a smokin' hottie. Bleach out Kristen Johnston's ("3rd Rock From the Sun") hair and toss her a mystic amulet, 'cause she's got the goods to be the "Earth X" master of the mystic arts.



FRANKIE MUNIZ AND BILLY BOB THORNTON as BRUCE BANNER AND HULK

After years of torment, Bruce Banner is free from the curse that made him the Hulk. Perpetually 11 years old, he's blind as a bat and has a big, green monkey to ride on that lets him see. Little Frankie Muniz ("Malcolm in the Middle") is a dead ringer for little Banner, and the Earth X Hulk is obviously a big, green version of Billy Bob Thornton from "Sling Blade."

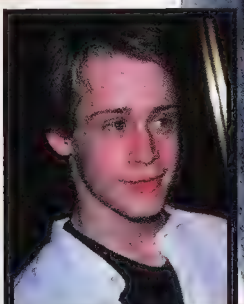


ROBERT LOGGIA AND ANN-MARGRET as WOLVERINE AND JEAN GREY

All the flowery writing about how Robert Loggia ("Independence Day") and Ann-Margret ("Grumpy Old Men") are perfect for the roles of the aged Wolverine and Jean Grey won't really match up to a visual comparison with these pictures. Look at 'em—dead-on match. 'Nuff said.

KURTWOOD SMITH as MR. S

The new leader of the X-Men, Scott Summers now goes under the name "Mr. S" and leads a team of circus freaks. Veteran character actor Kurtwood Smith ("Robocop," "That '70s Show") has the look of a high-school vice principal about him and would fit the bill as the new X-leader.



MACAULAY CULKIN as THE SKULL

What a brat. The Skull (the most powerful psychic mind on the planet) is leading his new Reich across America, snuffing out freedom. After some of the tantrums that landed child-star Macaulay Culkin on the front page of the *Enquirer*, we fear his boot as well, iron or not.

AUSTIN: CARRYL ESTRENE (OUTLINE) ARNOLD: JAMES MANCHIN (OUTLINE)KURTWOOD SMITH: LAURA LUDWIG (OUTLINE)CULKIN: GERARDO SHIMIZA (OUTLINE)-FOTO FANTASIES: SEAN CONNERY, ANTHONY HOPKINS, NATASHA HENSTRIDGE, KRISTEN JOHNSON, BILLY BOB THORNTON, LOGGIA, ANN MARGRET, MUNIZ AND REYNOLDS

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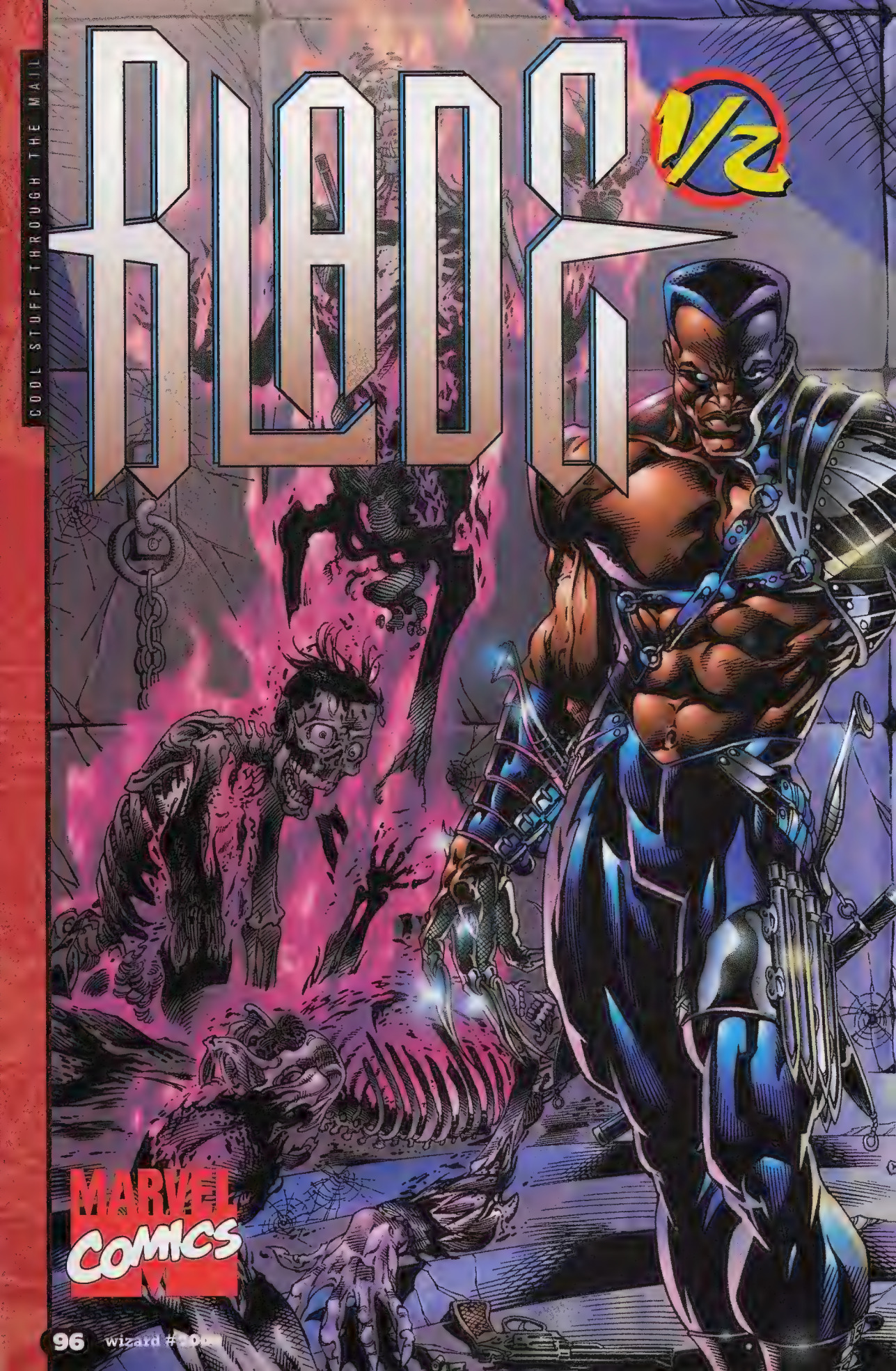
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DEATH BECOMES HER

Lady Death comes alive on the small screen

Ruler of Hell. Personification of Death. Queen of Bad Girl comics.

And still not satisfied.

So in the spring of 2001, Lady Death, the innocent girl turned undead warrior who wrested control of Hell's throne away from Lucifer himself, will conquer one more realm: your television set.

Chaos! Comics, the company "where darkness dwells," has struck an unholy alliance with ADV Films (the acclaimed Japanese animation distributor of titles like *Neon Genesis Evangelion* and *Battle Angel*) and Phoenix Entertainment (a noted Japanese animation house) to bring you the animated *Lady Death* movie, tentatively scheduled for a March 2001 release. For creator and Chaos! founder **Brian Pulido**, who first toiled as a first assistant director on music videos by such artists as KISS and Run DMC before making the jump to comics, it's the fulfillment of a dream.

"My dream, my vision, was to have Lady Death animated in a grand style by a group of Japanese animators," said Pulido. "For Lady Death, at the start of her entertainment career, we just always saw her animated."

Character designs and a script are still being developed, according to Chaos! Chief Operating Officer Adam Goldfine, but nevertheless, the film is on the fast track, with production on the straight-to-video movie set to begin early next year. And Lady Death purists need not worry—Pulido is heavily involved in the production.

"I'm an associate producer and I'm writing the screenplay," said Pulido. "I'm really happy to say I have complete creative control. It's something I lobbied for."

Expect Lady Death's transition from comics to film to be smooth, given Pulido's prior movie experience and the additional film work of Goldfine, who worked as a director of photography and lighting director on such films as "Radioland Murders," "Witchhunt"

DEADLY DUO Lady Death and her friends will be bouncing to the small screen soon.

NO JOKE! COMIC WRITER/ARTIST HOWARD CHAYKIN HAS ALSO WRITTEN FOR TV'S "VIPER" AND "THE FLASH."

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS...

and TV's "The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles." And Pulido's involvement in the project will further insure that the movie, which will be R-rated and very violent in tone, stays true to the Chaos! tradition of innovation and darkness.

As for the story itself, he plans on taking fans back to the very beginning.

"For those who are familiar with the story, I'm actually going to retell Lady Death's origin," revealed Pulido. "That roughly covers the storyline called "The Reckoning" and portions of "Between Heaven and Hell." It takes a look at how a girl named Hope during medieval times has her humanity sacrificed, goes to Hell, and, through trials and tribulations, winds up becoming the female personification of Death."

Though the movie will stick to the path laid out in the comics, expect some adjustments which are necessary with any jump from comics to film. "I wrote these particular storylines about eight years ago, and as I revisit them now, I have the opportunity to include a lot of scenes that I hadn't been able to include prior, and to restructure it," Pulido says. "For example, the Lady Death villain in that particular storyline is Lucifer, the father of evil. What I get to do now that I didn't at the time is include a couple of his other cronies, characters which fans have come to love to hate: Pagan, the court jester of Hell, and Seance, Lucifer's chief sorcerer."

When all is said and done, how does the creator feel about the chance to bring one of his characters to the screen? "It's fantastic," said Pulido. "It's been a long road. To ask for the degree of control that I've asked for is not easy to attain. Coming from the film tradition and then going into comics, to be able to reach a bigger group of people has always been the dream."

And that's only the beginning. The next logical step for Chaos! would be a live-action, theatrical release for the silver screen. Is an Evil Ernie movie in our future? "We have plans for other projects that are currently under development right now that we will announce pretty soon," said Goldfine. Pulido went further, revealing that an Evil Ernie screenplay is currently being written, and the prospect for a movie in the near future is definitely a possibility.

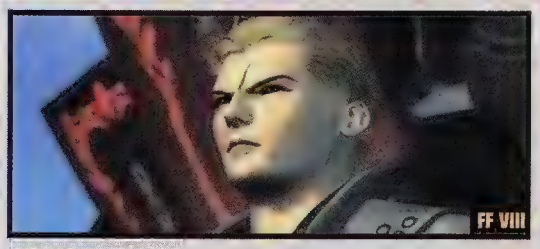
"Evil Ernie was always intended for live action," said Pulido. "On top of which, culturally, there's so much going on right now, in these post-Columbine, post-Woodstock times, in which kids are starting to be perceived as the enemy. And suddenly Evil Ernie becomes a very timely story."

In the meantime, Chaos! cravers can rest easy with the thought that Lady Death is coming to animated life.

■ RICHARD HO

THEFUTUREOF...

BETTER THAN A FORTUNE TELLER



MOVIES

Computer-generated imagery (CGI) ain't just the wave of the future, it's here now. Movie technology has grown light years in the last decade alone, and with just a bit more tweaking, CGI will be responsible for everything you see on the silver screen.

Including the actors. Take "Star Wars: Episode I–The Phantom Menace," for example. Director George Lucas relied heavily on CGI for backgrounds, with almost 95 percent of the frames in the film computer generated, as well as ships and even a large amount of supporting characters like Jar Jar and the rest of the Gungans. Word has it Lucas'd love to use 100-percent CGI in the third installment of the trilogy.

Even some of today's hottest video games like *Tomb Raider* and *Final Fantasy* take advantage of CGI. At the end of the mega-popular *FF VIII*, there's a 15-minute CGI sequence that's of near-cinematic quality.

Yep, as we get deeper and deeper into the new millennium, fans will no longer have favorite actors...just favorite characters.

McFARLANE BREATHES LIFE INTO 'TORSO'

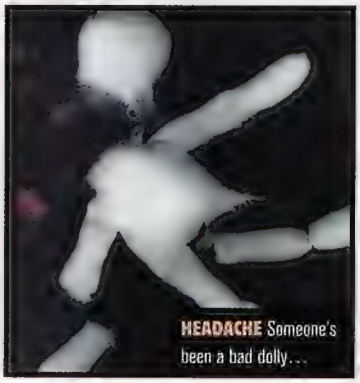
When most people find headless torsos, they call the cops. When **Todd McFarlane** finds headless torsos, he calls Hollywood.

The 'torso' McFarlane phoned about in this case was *Torso*, the Image comic created by **Brian Michael Bendis** (*Jinx*) and **Marc Andreyko** (*The Lost*). Bendis and Andreyko have inked a deal with Dimension Films to adapt their work into a major motion picture; they will write the screenplay, with McFarlane and **Terry Fitzgerald**, President of Todd McFarlane Entertainment, producing it.

Torso is based on a true story, picking up where the 1987 film "The Untouchables" left off, as legendary 1930s G-man Elliot Ness takes on one of the first serial killers in American history.

For Bendis, whether the script goes anywhere or not, he's already won the battle against poverty. "Bare minimum," says Bendis, "no matter what happens, this is another year I don't have to flip burgers."

■ SCOTT BRICK



HEADACHE Someone's been a bad dolly...

MYSTERY SOLVED?

Lowe, Hart generate 'Special' interest

It ain't easy being 'special.'

Just because you're indestructible or can see through walls doesn't mean finding parking is any easier or you like your teammates. That's the take behind "The Specials," a new independent movie—due out sometime early in 2000—that looks at superheroes the same way "Clerks" approached convenience store employees.

"Well, we've sort of been describing it as 'Spinal Tap' meets 'Batman,' because it's about dysfunctional superheroes and what they do when they're not fighting crime," explains producer Mark A. Altman. "That was what really appealed to us about the script. It's basically these guys who have these incredible superpowers, but it's really about their feuding and sitting around and everything when there's no supervillain to fight."

The film was shot late last year and stars a large ensemble cast, including **Rob Lowe** ("Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me") as the Weevil, Jamie Kennedy ("Scream") as Amok and Thomas Hayden Church ("George of the Jungle") as the Strobe, the team's leader.

For much-needed sex appeal, **Melissa Joan Hart** ("Sabrina the Teenage Witch") has a cameo as the leader of a rival, all-female superhero team known as the Femme Five.

"The Specials" was directed by Craig Mazin (who co-wrote "Rocket Man" and "Senseless") and written by **James Gunn** (who was just hired to write a new script for the live-action "Scooby Doo" movie). Gunn does double duty in the film, appearing as Minute Man (pronounced my-nute) whose power is to, well, become really tiny.

In the movie, the Specials are about to receive their very own toy line which promises to elevate their public image. But when things go very wrong, the Strobe breaks up the team and the members go their separate ways.

YOUNG AT HART Rob Lowe's got his eye on his new movie co-star, Melissa Joan Hart. And get this–she's legal!

"We play it very straight, like there are superheroes in our world," says Altman. "Unfortunately [the Specials] are like the fourth- or fifth-top superhero team. They are definitely not number one! In our world, Rob Lowe's character, the Weevil, he actually wants to defect to a better superhero team! He's the most well-liked member, and they [the other team] are offering him more kinds of merchandising and licensing deals. He's very taken by the offer because he wants to get off of this team!"

In the meantime, Altman is in search of someone to pick up his movie; he says several distributors have already expressed interest in picking up the film and he expects it to be released early 2000. "James wrote a really great script, and the director basically put that script on the screen," Altman adds. "I think that it's a fun movie. I mean, it's not the cure for cancer, but for anyone who loves comic books and who's wanted to see things treated in a different way than the usual Warner Bros. $200-million-dollar bloated movie, they're in for a treat with this film."

Now, that would be something special. ■ **PATRICK SAURIOL**

X-MENMOVIEWATCH

LIGHTS... CAMERA... ACTION?

MARSDEN

'X' ON YOUR CALENDAR 20th Century Fox has penciled in "X-Men" for release on June 30, 2000. Originally, Steven Spielberg's new sci-fi picture "Minority Report" (starring Tom Cruise) was to open on Independence Day weekend, but the picture got delayed due to script trouble. That left a major opening in Fox's summer schedule, and "X-Men" got bumped up to fill the slot.

EYE ON MARSDEN After auditioning nearly every twentysomething male actor in Hollywood, heartthrob James Marsden ("Disturbing Behavior") will don the ruby-quartz visor as Cyclops in the "X-Men" movie. Marsden, 26, got the last major unsigned role in the film, which is now shooting in and around Toronto, Canada.

SCOUTING REPORT As the production geared up to begin filming September 27, some of the local venues situated around Toronto were selected to be used as set locations in the movie. Parkwood Estate, a 12-acre mansion located in the city of Oshawa (just outside Toronto), was picked as Professor Xavier's School for Gifted Youngsters. The 55-room, 80-year-old mansion–seen in the Adam Sandler comedy "Billy Madison"–will serve for some of the exterior shots of the X-Mansion. A major action sequence will be filmed in a train station in the nearby city of Hamilton. The scene in question requires the cast and crew to film at night, uses helicopters and calls for major gunfire effects. No word yet what the mystery scene in question is.

GOING TO 'TOWN' For X-fans skeptical of the casting of Dougray Scott (Prince Henry in "Ever After") as the berserker Wolverine, X-producer Tom DeSanto recommends checking out a film called "Twin Town." It's a dark revenge comedy that features Scott as one tough, moody SOB in a small village in Wales.

HART PHOTO BY JIM SHELDON © MP-TV; LOWE © EDIE BASKIN/OUTLINE; JAMES MARSDEN ©STEVE SANDS/CORBIS-OUTLINE

NO JOKE! *SUPERMAN* WRITER JEPH LOEB IS ALSO A SCREENWRITER WHO'S WRITTEN SUCH FILMS AS "TEEN WOLF," "COMMANDO" AND "FIRESTORM."

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS...

TRAILERS...

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION?

MILKING TOP COW Fans of "Witchblade" may be disappointed with the slow development pace on the TV series, but a number of things look promising on the horizon. The new script, penned by J.D. Zeik ("Ronin"), has been warmly accepted and the next phase is on casting the lead actress and searching for a director. "It could very well come out anytime between now and fall 2000, but hopefully before then," says Top Cow's Director of Development Tim Hernandez. Michael Turner's animated "Fathom" movie is still in development at Fox Feature Animation, and the hunt for a screenwriter continues. But the most recent news is that "The Darkness" is also being developed as a theatrical movie. Acclaimed Hong Kong action director Andrew Lau (best known for his comic book "Stormchasers" adaptation) is now attached to direct this picture, with producer Chris Lee (also working on the upcoming "Final Fantasy" movie) also on board.

TYLER

LIV TYLER COURTESY EVERETT COLLECTION

MORE JEWELS IN 'RINGS' With the clock ticking down before filming begins on the first of director Peter Jackson's "Lord of the Rings" films, more actors have inked deals to star. Liv Tyler ("Armageddon") will play the part of Arwen, an Elf princess; Sean Bean ("GoldenEye") appears as the warrior Boromir; and John Rhys-Davies (Sallah from "Indiana Jones") portrays the dwarf Gimli. And legendary horror film actor Christopher Lee portrays Saruman, an evil wizard. Filming is under way in New Zealand, with the first movie to be released in the summer of 2001.

MORE 'WHOA'S "Matrix 2" and "Matrix 3" will be filmed back to back sometime around the late summer or fall of next year. The brothers Wachowski are hammering out the last of their contracts before they get started on writing the pair of scripts. Comic artist Geof Darrow (*Hard Boiled*) should begin working on new designs for the two films sometime in the early part of next year. And good ol' Keanu Reeves is set to make $20 million or more per movie if his agent plays his cards just right.

SHORT TAKES Detective Frank Black from the canceled "Millennium" series will meet Mulder and Scully on "X-Files" this season...Right now things are looking good for a "Heavy Metal 2: F.A.K.K." theatrical release sometime in January or February of next year...The tentative release date for the "Dungeons and Dragons" movie is October 2000...And while we're on the subject, the date for release of the "Batman Beyond" direct-to-video movie is November 7, 2000...There are now rumors floating around that Sandra Bullock might be offered the starring role in a "Wonder Woman" movie...Andrew Kevin Walker ("Sleepy Hollow") is writing a new "Silver Surfer" movie script...Fox Kids is in talks to develop a "Kiss: Psycho Circus" animated series...Talk about making future plans: Lucasfilm producer Rick McCallum recently told the media that due to scheduling conflicts, the next "Indiana Jones" film won't start filming until 2005(!). ■ **PS**

WITCHBLADE

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SPECIAL REPORT

TEST OF FAITH

Amid delays, distribution problems and religious controversies, 'Dogma' finally finds its home on the big screen

All Hell breaks loose in "Dogma," the latest film from writer/director/comic book scribe Kevin Smith.

With special effects to rival the original "Star Wars," a cast of mainstream Hollywood notables (Ben Affleck, Matt Damon, Chris Rock and Salma Hayek to name a few), and a plot that's sent William Donohue's Catholic League to Defcon One, "Dogma" is sure to thrust the independent filmmaker back into the entertainment limelight.

MATT DAMON (LEFT) AND BEN AFFLECK

Due to hit theaters November 12, "Dogma" tells the story of two fallen angels (Affleck and Damon) who find a loophole in Catholic tradition allowing them entry back into the Kingdom of God. If successful, the two will inadvertently destroy all existence. In order to prevent this catastrophe, a modern-day descendent of Christ (Linda Fiorentino) is recruited by the Heavens to stop the two at all costs. Along the way, she is joined by other celestial recruits, including none other than Jay and Silent Bob (of "Clerks" and "Mallrats" fame).

"It's pretty much an apocalyptic road movie," said Smith. "My other films were kind of day-in-the-life-type flicks, while this one is complete fantasy. It's like a living graphic novel and visually is our most accomplished movie to date."

Creating this labor of love has proven to be as difficult as David slaying the mythical Goliath. Originally intended as the follow-up to "Clerks," "Dogma" has been nearly five years in the making. But it wasn't the thought of religious controversy that slowed Smith; it was his own insecurity. With over 15 CGI shots and a budget of approximately $10 million (a rather hefty sum for a director who made his first film on over a dozen maxed-out credit cards), Smith felt that the project was beyond his "limited ability." Instead, he chose to focus on 'Mallrats" and "Chasing Amy"—two films that highlighted his gift at creating real-life characters with real-life emotions.

"To pull ["Dogma"] off and reach a larger audience with it, we needed name talent," said Smith. "Doing 'Chasing Amy'—a film that a lot of people seemed to like—enabled me to get that talent."

Making "Dogma" was one story. Releasing it, however, was another matter. Donohue and his League contend that the film intentionally sets out to offend Christians and their faith. Their resolve proved powerful enough to see the film move from its original distributor Miramax to Lions Gate (distributor of 1998 Oscar nominees "Gods and Monsters" and "Affliction"). "It's a small group of people that are always mad at everybody," said Salma Hayek, who plays the heavenly muse Serendipity. "They created this organization to protest against things...and justify their existence."

Smith views all the mudslinging as just another critic unhappy with his work.

"I know I made a film that I'm proud of and that doesn't mock Catholic beliefs," Smith said. ■ ERIC MORO

FROM LEFT: CHRIS ROCK, JASON MEWES AND SALMA HAYEK

ALL SPECIALS SHOTS ©1999 MINDFIRE ENTERTAINMENT, PHOTOS BY SHERI LANE

NO JOKE!

GROO CREATOR SERGIO ARAGONES HAS DONE WORK FOR *MAD MAGAZINE*, AS WELL AS CARTOON SNIPPETS FOR THE 1980s "TV'S BLOOPERS AND PRACTICAL JOKES" SHOW.

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS...

DOGMAPOUND

WHO'S A WHAT'SA?

Kevin Smith's ability to create "real life" characters for the big screen gets put to the test in his latest film. Here's how the writer/director describes the "Dogma" cast of supernaturals:

JAY AND SILENT BOB (JASON MEWES AND KEVIN SMITH): The same drug-dealing philosophers from "Clerks," "Mallrats" and "Chasing Amy." "Jay and Silent Bob are the pin and balloon of the movie. Anytime the flick threatens to become too inflated with theology or spirituality, they come along to pop the balloon and let some air out."

BARTLEBY AND LOKI (BEN AFFLECK AND MATT DAMON): Fallen angels that, through a loophole in Church dogma, find a way back into Heaven–a way that may just end all existence in the process. "Bartleby and Loki are our typical, misunderstood leads, whose actions set everything in motion."

BETHANY (LINDA FIORENTINO): The descendent of Christ who is enlisted by Heaven to save creation. "Bethany is the audience's way into the movie because she's the only human character. I mean, at this point I can't even consider Jay and Silent Bob human!"

AZRAEL (JASON LEE): The legendary demon of Hell. "Azrael is definitely the villain of the film, but not the mustache-twisting, 'I'll get you my pretty, and your little dog, too.' He's more a villain by default whose actions are out of self-serving desperation, rather than self-serving grandiosity."

RUFUS THE 13TH APOSTLE (CHRIS ROCK): The 13th Apostle of Christ who was left out of the bible because he's black. "Rufus plays the commentary on how much of history is controlled by the white man, and just how skewed it is because of that."

SERENDIPITY (SALMA HAYEK): A Heavenly muse who spends her time on Earth as a stripper. "Serendipity gets to comment on how human beings deal with God, faith and spirituality."

CARDINAL GLICK (GEORGE CARLIN): A major player in the Church who is pushing for a more "user friendly" religion. "Cardinal Glick is a very sincere salesman. In this case, he's selling a revamp of the Catholic Church."

METATRON (ALAN RICKMAN): The angelic messenger of God. "Metatron is the voice of God because as humans we can't hear God's voice ourselves. So for me, the voice of God has to be British."

GOD (ALANIS MORISSETTE): Enough said. "God's God. But the portrayal that we put forth in this movie is really sweet, warm and touching."

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BASIC TRAINING

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TIMSALE SHOWS YOU

HOW TO DRAW BATMAN

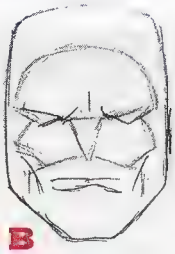
I couldn't have been more happy when the folks at *Wizard* asked me to do a "Basic Training" on how to draw the Dark Knight Detective. My favorite aspect of drawing comics is evoking a mood on the page, and Batman's costume conveys a mood better than any other. You can tell at a glance what Batman is about: dark, angry, brooding, and frightening. Those emotions leave a lot of latitude, and many artists have drawn Batman in many different styles over the years. I'm going to show you how I draw Batman. Let's start at the top...

HEAD GAMES

I draw the head in four steps. First, start with an oval and divide it in half horizontally—that's where the eyes go (fig. A). A blocky and long face makes him look stoic and strong.

Next, I draw the facial features. Batman's face has a strong jaw, pronounced cheekbones, a pointy nose, and a slash for a mouth—he wears a perpetual scowl (fig. B).

A



B

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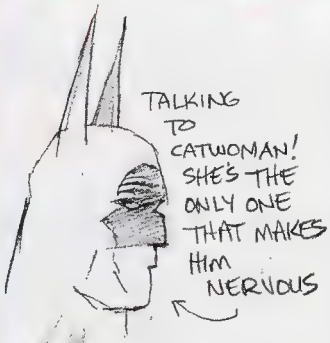
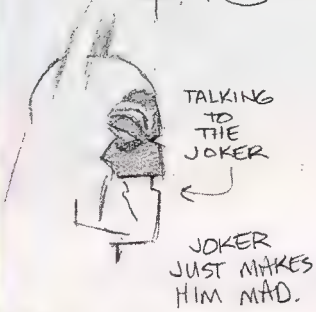




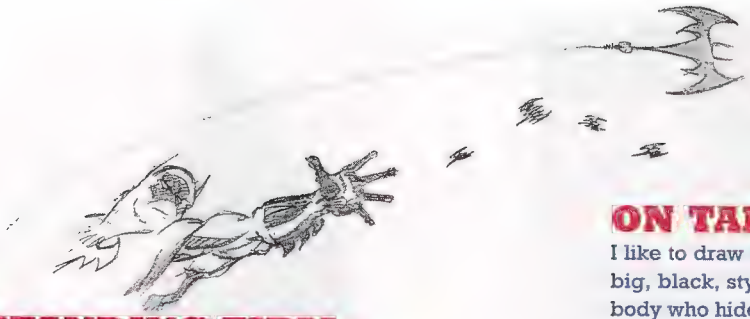
Third, I add the shadows to his face. His mask is shiny and he always looks as though there's a light behind him, so the forehead and cheeks are in shadow (fig. C). Finally, add the neck and ears. His neck starts up high, almost to his eyes (fig. D). Look how much more powerful adding the neck makes him look! And notice how high the neck starts in the profile shot (fig. E). As for the ears...these two pics show what a difference they can make. The short-eared Batman (fig. F) looks more like a cuddly pussy cat than a creature of the night. The other one (fig. G), with it's spiked ears, seems more threatening.

F

G

NO JOKE! ARTIST JIM BALENT HAS HIDDEN AT LEAST ONE CAT ON ALL 68 OF HIS COVERS FOR *CATWOMAN* SINCE ISSUE #10.

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS...



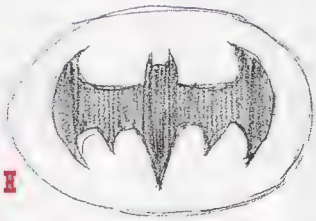
STANDING FIRM

Batman is from the school of superheroes that are proportioned like regular guys, only more so (Captain America, Green Lantern), as opposed to extra-big behemoths (Hulk, Superman). I picture him as about 6-foot-4 with an incredible physique. He stands defiantly, and that should show right away. He should be a strong presence while just standing still. His arms are held away from his body and back a little bit, so you can see the muscles from the sides. Even though he may just be standing there, it looks like he is about to throw a punch. His feet are spread shoulder-width apart. A lot of it is the size of the shoulders and how he holds himself. Now here's how I break up all the pieces.

ON TARGET

I like to draw the "Year One" chest emblem—simply a big, black, stylized bat (fig. H). I don't see why somebody who hides in shadows would have a yellow target on his chest. There are five points along the bottom of the bat and four points on top—two for the head. And if you want to draw the modern Bat symbol, just put a yellow oval around it (fig. I).

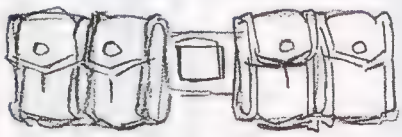
H



I

UTILIZE THIS

I draw his utility belt with pouches (fig. J), not cylinders (fig. K). Pouches are more practical—it seems those little cylinders would limit what he could carry. Viewed from the front, there are six pouches, three on each side. Inside, he has a batarang with a line attached to it that he throws and small, bat-shaped "darts" he uses to disable opponents. I don't like it when Batman uses many Bat-gadgets beyond that.



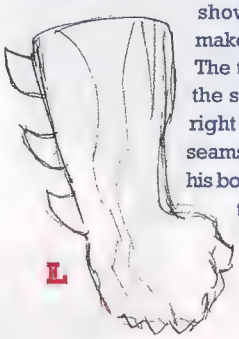
J

K

MAN IN BLACK

Batman's boots, gloves, cowl and trunks are black and reflective, unlike the rest of his costume. The boots have rubber soles and don't make noise when he walks. Draw the boots coming up to a point on the front of the leg that almost reaches the bottom of the kneecap. I generally draw a reflection down from that point, a little squiggly line.

As for the gloves, they come equipped with spikes on the outer edge (fig. L)—functionless but cool! I like to show the seams on the sides to make them look more like gloves. The three spikes that come out of the side of his forearm come out right from the seams. I also draw seams on the fingers. The black of his boots and gloves disappears into the black of the cape or the night; it makes him spookier.



L

THE FUTURE OF...

COMIC ART

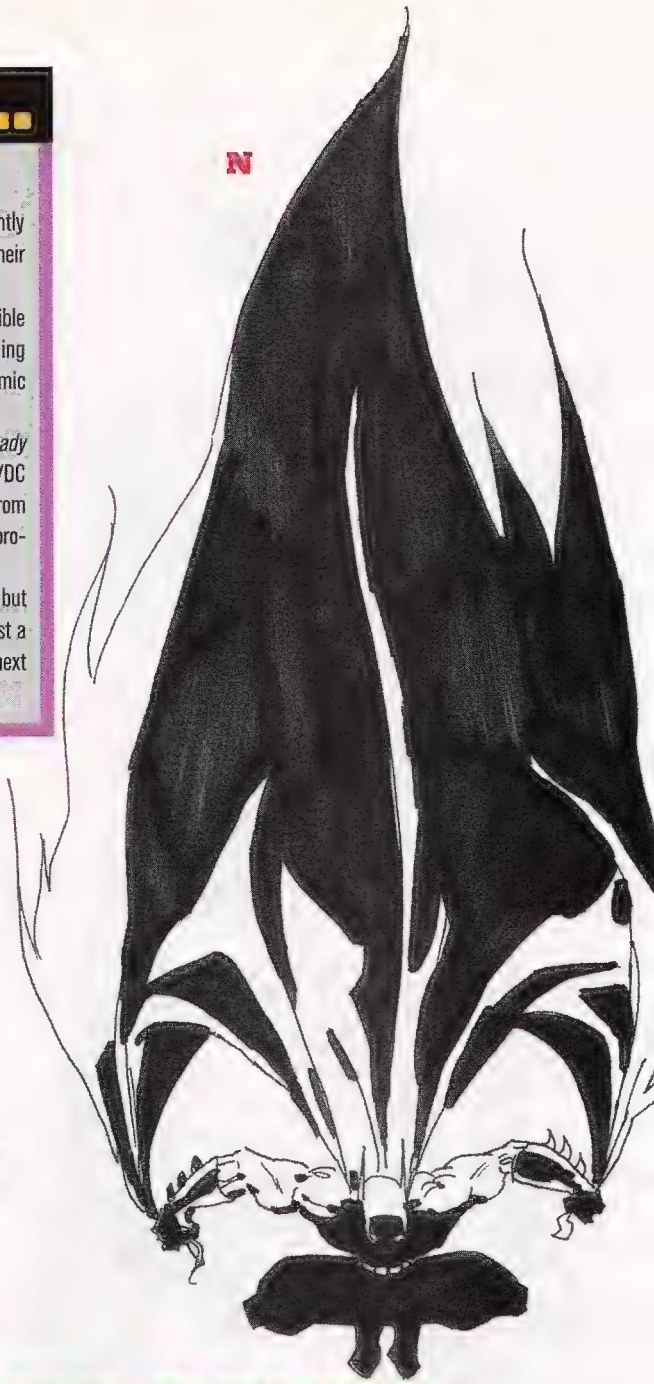
Thanks to Kevin Smith's film "Chasing Amy," inkers are currently stuck with the nickname "tracers." Well, that'll be the least of their worries in the next millennium.

Coloring. Lettering. Logos. Computers are currently responsible for the majority of that stuff nowadays, and with the continuing advances of computers, inking will likely become the next comic step to go all-digital.

In fact, it's already happened on a small scale. Books like *Lady Pendragon*, *Fighting American: Dogs of War* and even the Marvel/DC "Amalgam" book *Thorion of The New Gods* all went straight from pencils to colors, no inking necessary. However, the "pencil-only" process still has bugs and isn't nearly as sharp as an inked page.

And yeah, some books are still colored and lettered by hand, but computers have grabbed a huge chunk of those markets. It's just a matter of time before inking (and maybe someday, penciling) next falls prey to the computer gods. ■ THE *WIZARD* STAFF

N



M

BLOWIN' IN THE WIND

By far the coolest thing about Batman's costume is his cape. It's the part of the costume you can play around with the most and put your own stamp on.

The cape starts at a center point on his chest, right below the collarbone. From there it's thrown back or following the motion of his body. Generally, when he's just standing quietly, the cape hangs at ankle length (fig. M). But the fun part is when you exaggerate it. For instance, leaping, it can be stretched for dramatic, fluttery effect (fig. N). On a rooftop, he can wrap himself in it and let the wind whip it around (see fig. O on pg. 108). I tend not to show speed lines, but the cape is a great way to show Batman in motion.

NO JOKE! JOE MADUREIRA GOT HIS FIRST PENCILING GIG AT THE RIPE OLD AGE OF 16.

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CAPE FEAR

Every artist has used the cape to different expressive effect; two artists' renditions I love are Neal Adams' (fig. P) and David Mazzucchelli's (fig. Q). My cape is actually somewhere in between—I love the Adams look, but it's more regal, more uniform than I see the character. And the Mazzucchelli look is too down to earth for me. My version is much more "torn" than most others, with many little odd-sized tatters on the end. I like to think of his cape as a living thing that changes to reflect the mood of the story.

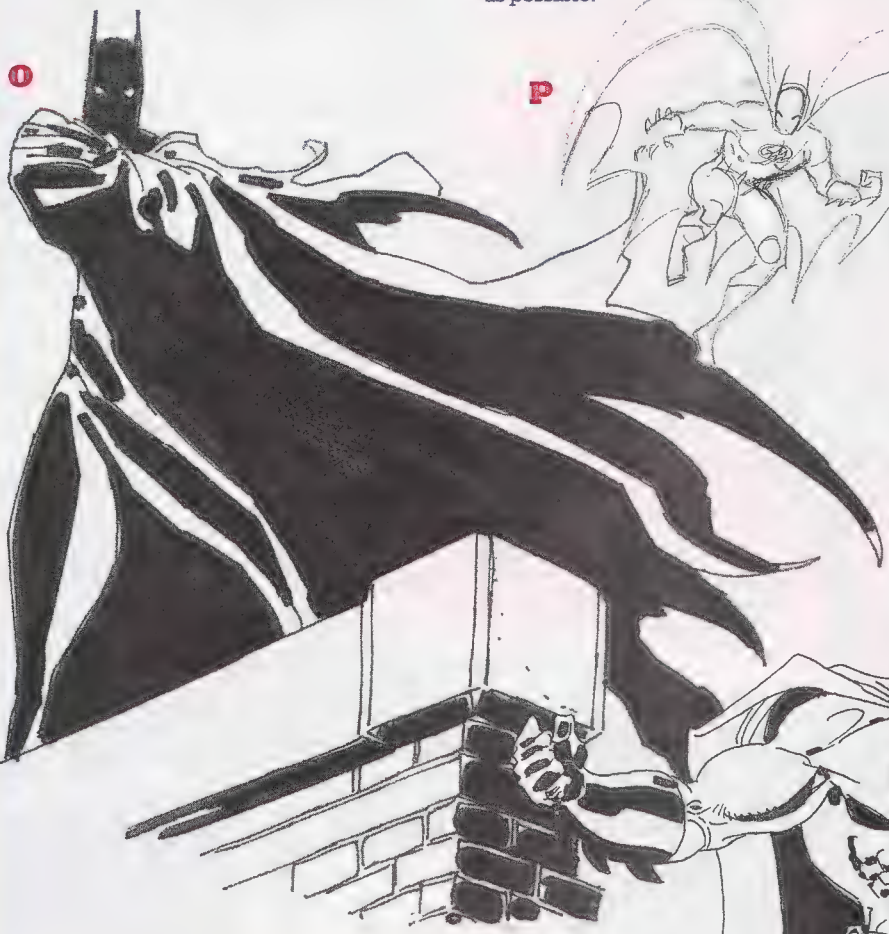
SHARP-DRESSED MAN

Bruce Wayne is always a snappy dresser. He wears loose-fitting, 1940s-style dark suits, with long, draping lines and broad shoulders. I look at a lot of old movies and watch stars like Robert Mitchum, Burt Lancaster and Kirk Douglas; they're my models for both the clothes and a sense of power and style.

Make sure you give him that superhero squint! It makes him look determined. Big, open eyes, like manga eyes, look more vulnerable.

Remember, though, he's uncomfortable as plain-old Bruce and more comfortable as Batman. I think he's really Batman just pretending to be Bruce Wayne, so I tend to have him in costume as much as possible.

O



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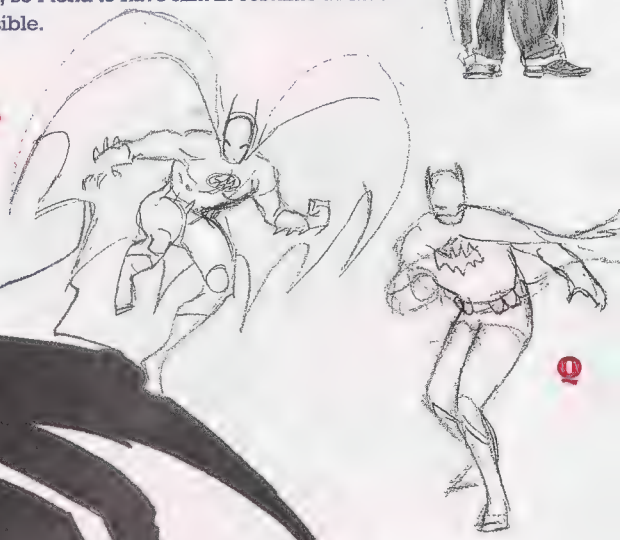

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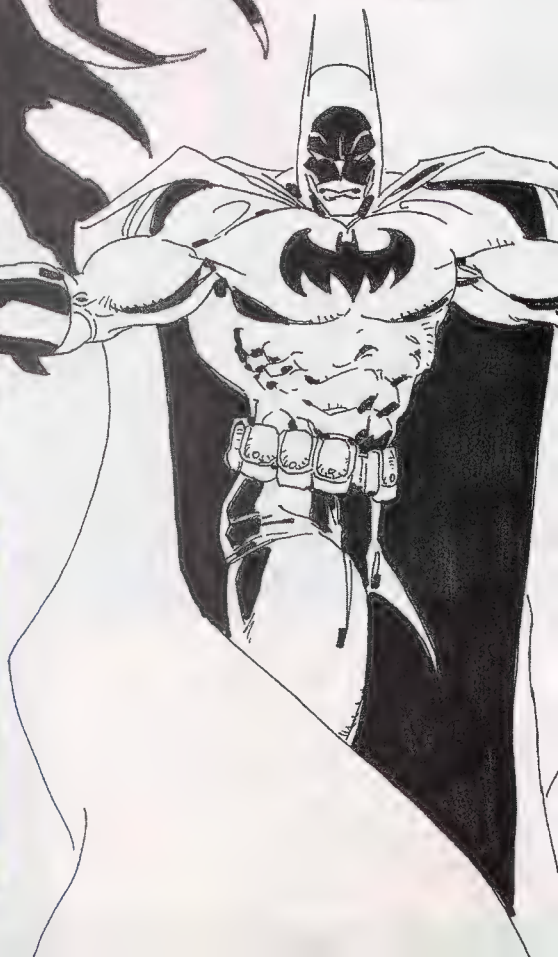

That ought to be plenty to get you started, but it's only the beginning. There's one other element to drawing Batman that's as important as any other—Gotham City itself. And that's a whole 'nother column. In the meantime, check out books like *New York in the Forties*, by Andreas Feininger. It's full of black-and-white photos that'll inspire you to draw some real dank and dirty dark alleys. Good luck!

Check out Tim Sale's rendition of Batman every month in DC's 13-issue mini-series Batman: Dark Victory.

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Drawing BOARD

Who needs the pros? This is the showcase for WIZARD READERS' ART

With the dawning of a new millennium right around the corner, it's only fitting that we profile 'Dawns' of another kind, namely the winners of our "Battle-Ready Dawn" contest from back in *Wizard* #94. Our grand-prize winner is Carrie Hall out of Bloomfield, Michigan. Carrie's "Violet Dawn" version of the avenging angel really knocked our socks off. For all her hard-earned efforts, Carrie is rewarded with an awesome Grendel Prime statue signed by sculptor Randy Bowen. Thanks to Carrie, our runners-up, and everyone who entered. Take care, and keep on drawin'!

GRAND-PRIZE WINNER

THIS ONE CAUGHT OUR EYE

VIOLET DAWN
Carrie Hall
Bloomfield, Mich.

THE BOOTY

NO JOKE! PALEONTOLOGIST AND COMIC ARTIST WALTER SIMONSON HAS A SIGNATURE THAT LOOKS LIKE A DINOSAUR.

STEEL-CLAD DAWN

James Silverwolf
Prescott, Ariz.

EMERALD DAWN

Tabitha K. Heidkamp
Vanencia, Calif.

DRAGON-RIDER DAWN

Temmar Karim
La Queu En Brie,
FRANCE

HEY! BE IN WIZARD!

Want your art to appear in future issues of *Wizard*? Think you've got what it takes? (Quality *and* originality count, y'know.) Hey, it worked for pros like Jeff Matsuda and Leinil Francis Yu, who went on to stardom! Then send your "Drawing Board" entries to:

SUBMIT

"Drawing Board"
c/o Wizard Entertainment
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

And follow these rules or else: Use any form of unlined paper or posterboard (no larger than 8 inches by 11 1/4 inches) and any medium (oils, crayon, mustard, etc.—but not neon inks). Put your name, full address and TELEPHONE NUMBER on the back of your piece, and mail it flat to avoid damage. **You must also include a color photo of yourself.** All entries are non-returnable and become the property of Wizard Entertainment. Employees of Wizard Entertainment are the sole judges of the contests, and all decisions are final. Got it? All right, good luck!

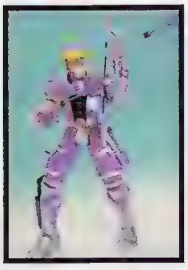
TOY CHEST

AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!

For the last 10 years, Toy Biz has made extensive toy lines for some of Marvel's biggest superstars—The X-Men, Spider-Man and the Fantastic Four to name a few—and now the Earth's Mightiest Heroes get their turn.

Based on the brand-new "Avengers" animated series, Toy Biz will release two separate waves of action figures featuring Marvel's heroes in their new TV incarnations. The first starts off with Captain America (who doesn't even show up in the series!), Ant-Man, Wasp, Vision and Ultron. And the second assortment—which will ship at the same time—will include Wonder Man, Hawkeye, Falcon, Tigra and Kang, the first Toy Biz go-around for this popular Marvel bad guy. While the show's already on the air, look for the Avengers action figures by the end of the year.

MIGHTY ASSEMBLY The new "Avengers" line from Toy Biz includes Captain America and (clockwise from far left): Kang, Wasp, Ultron, Vision, Tigra, Hawkeye, Falcon, Ant-Man and Wonder Man.



BLOCKS BY PAUL SCHRADER; AVENGERS COURTESY OF TOY BIZ.

BY TOM PALMER JR.

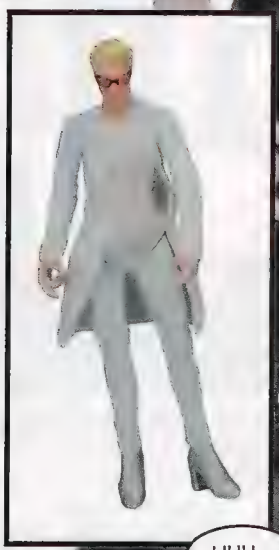
NO JOKE! DC COMICS' MR. MIRACLE IS BASED ON COMIC ARTIST AND REAL-LIFE ESCAPE ARTIST JIM STERANKO, BEST KNOWN FOR MARVEL'S *S.H.I.E.L.D.* SERIES IN THE '60S.

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS

MATRIX FIGURES, DUDE

Sure, Keanu Reeves wanted to know "What is the Matrix?" but the question on the tip of every toy fan's tongue was "Where are the Matrix toys?" Well, now that question has finally been answered thanks to WB Toy and Diamond Comic Distributors. This November, a full line of six Matrix toys will be released at finer comic book and specialty shops. Look for Neo, Morpheus, Trinity, Cypher, Agent Smith and Switch. And just be thankful that there won't be a toy of one of those babies that was plugged into the Matrix. Those things were creepy-lookin'.

EXCELLENT FIGURES Download these bitchin' Matrix toys at your convenience: (clockwise from top) Trinity, Neo, Agent Smith, Morpheus, Cypher and Switch.



MATRIX COURTESY OF DIAMOND COMIC DISTRIBUTORS. KEANU REEVES PHOTO COURTESY THE EVERETT COLLECTION.

DC SEES GREEN

DC's going retro in February when they unveil the next set of DC Direct action figures. Inspired by classic the *Green Lantern/Green Arrow* comics by Denny O'Neil and Neal Adams, DC will unveil Oliver Queen as Green Arrow, Hal Jordan as Green Lantern and Dinah Lance as Black Canary.

But wait, there's more! Log on the HasbroCollectors.com Website to pick up the missing Total Justice figures. There was a fourth wave planned for this series, and now those figures will finally see the light of day in two boxed sets: Green Lantern vs. Dr. Polaris and The Flash and Blue Beetle (with a li'l Atom figure!). Check 'em out this holiday season.

THREE'S COMPANY So where's Jack Tripper? Anyway, these Hasbro figures based on the classic '70s GL/GA stories kick serious rump. Buy 'em.

DC TWO-PACKS COURTESY OF HASBRO. ©GREEN LANTERN, GREEN ARROW AND BLACK CANARY COURTESY OF DC COMICS

HOMEMADE HEROES OF THE MONTH

THE BEST OF FAN-MADE ACTION FIGURES

DEADPOOL

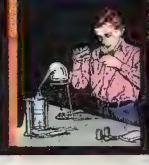
Brian Perone
Baton Rouge, La.

Sure, Toy Biz has made some Deadpool figure before, but they don't look as cool as this one that Brian concocted. He used a Sea Hunter Spidey for the body, with some sculpting compound and a sword stolen from a Psylocke figure. For all his hard work, Brian gets a mini-bust of Black Bolt signed by sculptor Randy Bowen. How inhuman!

Prize supplied by Bowen Designs. Black Bolt strikes a pose.

Hey!

Do you want in on the fun? To enter the homemade figure contest, send at least TWO well-lit, clear, color photographs (No Polaroids, and put 'em in cool or funny poses!), along with your name, address, a DETAILED DESCRIPTION of how you created your figure, your full phone number (including area code) and even e-mail address to:



HOMEMADE HEROES
c/o Wizard Entertainment
P.O. Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

NO JOKE! MICHAEL TURNER HAS HIDDEN "ERNIE THE SEAHORSE," A CUTSEY SEAHORSE CHARACTER, SOMEWHERE IN THE ART OF EVERY ISSUE OF *FATHOM*.

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS...

GIANT ROBOTS!

Need an action figure to pound on all your giant monster toys? Look no further than Bandai's Big Guy and Rusty the Boy Robot figures! Early next year, look for a full toy line inspired by the new animated series based on Frank Miller and Geof Darrow's comic series. Naturally, the Big Guy's the star of the show with four different toys: Talking Big Guy, Flying Big Guy, Armed Big Guy and X-Ray Big Guy, each with Rusty as an accessory. And just in case you need someone to beat the crap out of, pick up the Evil Argo toy. (W)

BIG DEAL Rusty and Big Guy can inflict some serious damage on your wussy toys. So there!

BIG GUY AND RUSTY COURTESY OF BANDAI.

THE FUTURE OF...

BETTER THAN A FORTUNE TELLER

TOYS

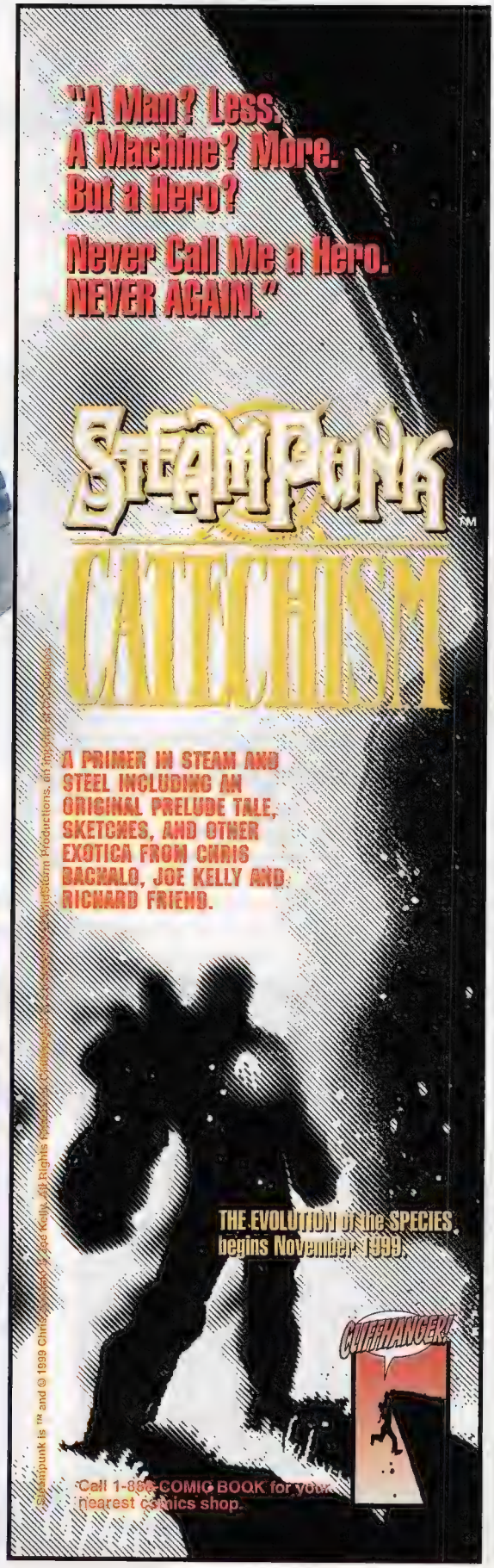
Toys that talk to each other?

Yep, what used to be the stuff of fairy tales and movies like "Toy Story" is already a reality. Sure, there've been talking toys in the past, but they don't even approach the high-tech playthings of today.

Take Toy Biz's Tuff Talkin' Wrestlers Sting and JAKKS Pacific's Wired.net Stone Cold Steve Austin. Smaller microchips and better-sounding voice chips have helped these foot-tall wrestling toys recognize other toys through various sensors and spit out specific phrases. It's almost as if the toys were alive!

What's next? Well, the talking toys can only get smaller, better and much more prevelant. Hasbro's 4-inch Star Wars toys currently speak with tiny chips that are scanned over a hand-held reader, but it's just a matter of time before they speak without any accessories.

Face it, toys are about to get a whole lot louder.



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stuff

COMIC BOOK MERCHANDISE YOU CAN BUY...

By David Borak and the *Wizard* Staff

AVAILABLE AT YOUR LOCAL COMICS RETAILER

Who among us doesn't like stuff? Whether it's Batman's Utility Chastity Belt, the Thing's Thing Ring or the Young Justice Spin the Bottle Set, we're all suckers for comic-related merchandise. Each month, *Wizard* will strive to show you the latest and super-neatest in comic book statues, posters, pins, magnets, shirts and other goodies. In short, if it's cool, and if it's stuff, you'll find it here.

YULETIDE SPIDER

Bring a little web-slinging cheer to your Christmas tree with the Spider-Man Resin Ornament ($25) from Creative Licenses. This 6"-tall, cold-cast, porcelain ornament was hand-painted and sculpted by Sam Greenwell and features Spidey web-slinging with a bag of goodies on his shoulder. This color-painted goodie will be available in November.

SPIDEY CLAUS He's got a web sack full o' goodies.

SPREAD 'EM The future Batman is one tough punk.

BEYOND COOL

Fans of the "Batman Beyond" TV show will be clamoring for this maquette of the futuristic, teenage Dark Knight, Terry McGinnis. He's perched atop Gotham City and limited to an edition of 2,500. From the Warner Bros. Studio Store, it'll set you back $150.

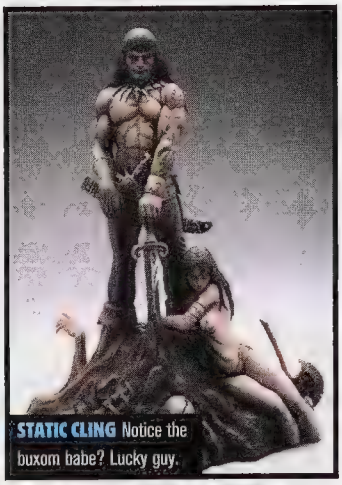
PURGATORI RISES UP

This November, Diamond Select and Eternal Toys bring you a hellish representation of Brian Pulido's vampire bitch goddess with the Purgatori Resin Statue ($175). This cold-cast, resin statue, sculpted by Sam Greenwell, stands over 20" tall and comes on an Egyptian-themed base. There's also a Ruby Sapphire Artist's Proof edition ($300) that comes signed by Pulido and Greenwell and is limited to just 300 pieces. Each statue comes in a custom box with a certificate of authenticity.

SHE-DEVIL Purgatori is hotter than hell.

A BARBARIC STATUE

This November, Moore Creations brings a Frank Frazetta masterpiece to life with the Barbarian Resin Statue ($250). Based on one of Frazetta's most famous images in fantasy art, the Barbarian stands 13" tall and comes fully painted. Sculpted by Clayburn Moore, the Barbarian stands on a base of rocks and skulls with a sword in hand and voluptuous slave girl by his side.



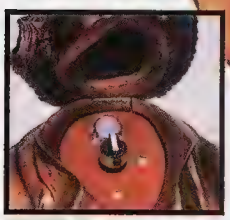
STATIC CLING Notice the buxom babe? Lucky guy.

NO JOKE! WONDER WOMAN CREATOR DR. WILLIAM MARSTON ALSO INVENTED THE LIE DETECTOR.

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS...

SHAKESPEARE'S NO BUST

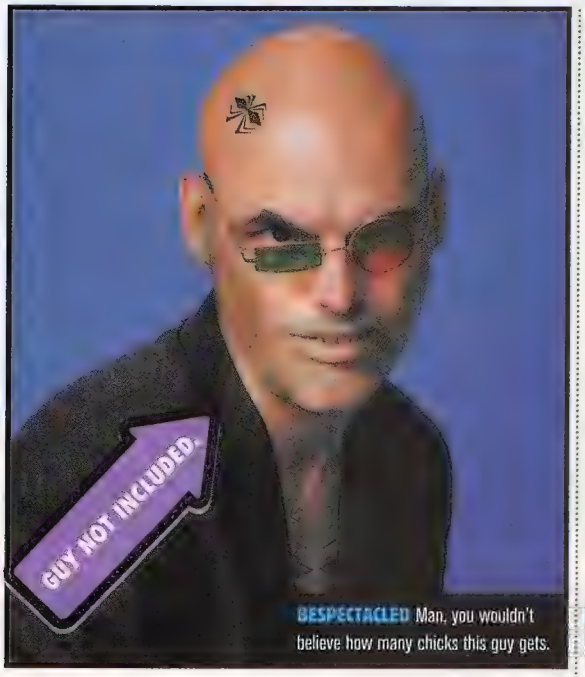
Quick, to the Bat-pole! Now you can open your own hidden compartments with a Shakespeare bust just like the one the Dynamic Duo used on the '60s "Batman" TV show. Released by Majic Productions and sculpted by Scott Fensterer, the head of the 21-inch bust pulls back to reveal an on/off switch with light that can operate any electrical appliance. It's $225.00. To order, call (407) 260-8869.



THE BAT'S BARD Store batarangs in the hollow head.

FOUR-EYED SPIDER

True fans of *Transmetropolitan* will want to pick up the Spider Jerusalem Glasses Prop ($49.95), available from DC in December. These gold-rimmed, UV-coated shades are just like the ones Spider wears in the comic, but are made for display only and should not be worn. Each prop comes in a 2 1/2"-high by 6 1/2"-wide metal case.



BESPECTACLED Man, you wouldn't believe how many chicks this guy gets.

HOTSTUFF!!!!

PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

TOTAL FRAME-UP

Fan-favorite artist Jim Lee invades Gotham City with a signed lithograph of Batman and Robin about to hand out some serious justice. It measures 23" X 31 7/8" when framed, and it's available now from the Warner Bros. Studio Store, but there are only 250 copies and they'll set you back $275 each. So go get 'em!

DYNAMIC DUO Jim Lee and DC, that is.

HUNTING FOR SANDMAN

Available from DC is a new print set from the pages of *Sandman: The Dream Hunters*. The Sandman: The Dream Hunters Print Set ($19.95) features two 10" x 13" prints with art by Yoshitaka Amano. Both full-color prints come shrink-wrapped on cardboard and are suitable for framing. Look for the set in November.

SANDSTORM Kick up a ruckus with these new prints.

stuff

CYBER CARDS

Now you can download Xena, Hercules and Star Trek trading cards straight to your computer. And these are more than just pretty pictures. Each CyberAction Cards Set ($3.95) includes 3 or 4 cards and showcases actor bios, episode descriptions, trivia, sound clips and a live-action video clip from the show. For full details, log onto www.cyberaction.com. Sorry, no bubble gum included.

CARDED You don't have to be 21 to download these.

THE FUTURE OF...

BETTER THAN A FORTUNE TELLER

COMIC MERCHANDISE

You got to keep it real.

Yeah, merchandise like posters, statues, action figures and all that stuff are neat, but what really makes comic fans froth at the mouth are actual props. If you're a big Superman fan, how'd you like a real hunk o' Kryptonite? Well, it's already available from DC. There's even a Green Lantern ring, a Batarang and the Key to Hell (as seen in Vertigo/DC's *Sandman*). Fanboys love this kind of stuff, and comic companies are slowly starting to come around.

Bigger, better and cooler comic merchandise is right around the corner. It's only a matter of time before you'll be hefting around your own recreation of Thor's mighty mallet Mjolnir, Captain America's shield or a full-size replica of Iron Man's armor. Props give a three-dimensionality to comics, and the future certainly looks a whole lot fuller.

GL RING

GIRL POWER STATUE

DC presents the Supergirl Statue ($195), available in stores March 29. Based on designs by Gary Frank, this cold-cast porcelain statue shows the Girl of Steel floating in the air next to a gothic building. Sculpted by Tim Bruckner, the painted statue stands 12" tall by 5 1/4" wide by 3 1/4" deep.

ANGELIC BEAUTY Helen Slater never looked this good.

GREEN LANTERN'S LIGHT

This Green Lantern PVC set—which'll set buyers back $39.95—will have ring-slingers everywhere green with envy. The GL Corps is alive and well in this set from DC, which features Green Lantern characters past and present: Kyle Rayner, Hal Jordan, Ganthet, Sinestro, Alan Scott, John Stewart and Guy Gardner. The full-color figures range from 3 to 4 1/2 inches high.

LORDS OF THE RINGS A DC legacy alive in miniature.

Check your local stores for availability of all these funky-fresh products. Or ask your friendly neighborhood comic store to special order 'em for ya!

YO! Are you a company who sells stuff cool enough to make the grade here? Let us be the judges of that. Send any info and/or samples to:

Stuff For "Stuff"
c/o Wizard Entertainment
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

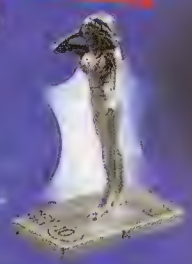
NO JOKE! ARTIST FRANK FRAZETTA HAS A COSTUME SHOP CALLED "FRAZETTA'S FANTASY COSTUMES" IN EAST STROUDSBURG, PA.

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS...

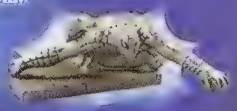
The Only Jail in the Marvel Universe Strong Enough to Hold a Super-Villain

8 pewter Super Hero tokens make this game a true collector's edition

HULK


INVISIBLE WOMAN

STORM


SPIDER-MAN

THOR

IRON MAN

CAPTAIN AMERICA

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Your favorite games with a . . . twist!

video STUFF

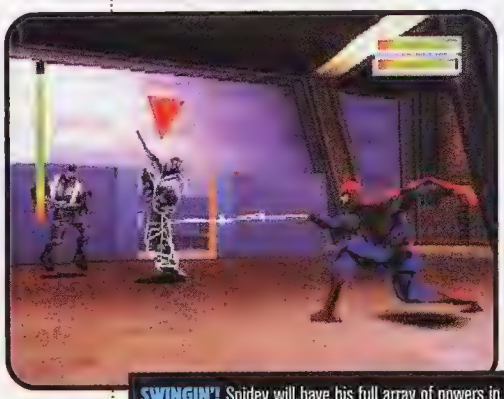
By Matthew Danish, Jerry Dorsey and the *Wizard* Staff

What? Do you need us to draw a picture? We took a bunch of video games, locked ourselves away and played 'em 'til our thumbs fell off. We don't pretend to be experts, just fun-lovin' folks who like our salsa spicy, our couch cushy and our video games kick-ass...here's what floated our boat, or not.

THE SPIDER BYTES

Listen up, true believers: Activision has released the first screens of *Spider-Man*, a game that may turn out to be the first to truly do ol' Pete Parker justice. Slated for release on the PlayStation, *Spider-Man* will put everyone's favorite web-swinger into a fully three-dimensional, free-roaming environment. Besides that, players should expect to see all of Spidey's classic talents at work. The company is hoping to make the game's web-shooting mechanic as versatile as it is in the comic, allowing Spidey to tie up villains, shoot webbing projectiles and even fashion a temporary shield. The game will even implement the spider-sense by rumbling the Dual Shock controller when an enemy is nearby.

Though *Spider-Man* isn't expected to be released until late 2000, even at this early stage it looks exceptional. No word yet on a plotline, but expect to see all the major villains from the comic.



SWINGIN'! Spidey will have his full array of powers in his newest video incarnation, including spider-sense!

POWERFUL PS2

Sony has at last fully unveiled their next-generation game system, the PlayStation2. Sporting a sleek design reminiscent of Sony's Vaio line of computers, the system will be DVD based and will include basic support for playing DVD movies. The system will also include three different industry standard ports (USB, I.Link and PCMCIA), which will allow the PS2 to interface with most PC peripherals. And the inclusion of an optical audio output will make Dolby surround sound a standard for PS2 software. Though the PS2 will not ship with a modem, Sony has plans to unleash a full-scale online program within a year after release. The PlayStation2 is slated for release on March 4, 2000 in Japan, for a suggested retail price of 39,800 yen (roughly $370), with a U.S. release expected in the fall.

NOT JUST A FANTASY

With barely enough time for the *Final Fantasy VIII* presses to cool, Squaresoft has confirmed that *Final Fantasy IX* is well into development, surprising all by revealing that *FF IX* will indeed be released on the current PlayStation, not the PS2 as expected. No story info has yet been released, and no official release date has been set, but insiders at Squaresoft have hinted that the game could be released as early as spring 2000 in Japan.

TWICE THE FUN PS2 looks as sleak as a Stealth bomber, and features almost as much power.

BACK TO THE TOMB

Prepare to defile the dead again! Eidos Interactive recently released information on *Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation*, the fourth game in the series. This episode will take the sexy Lara Croft back to her roots, as she explores the ruins of ancient Egypt. Responding to common criticisms of *TR II* and *III*, the game is expected to feature more complex puzzle-solving elements as well as more detailed, better-fleshed-out environments. As with the previous games, Eidos is shooting for a late November release. ■

UP AHEAD

Attitude Adjustment...Terror of Tiny Tank...Shadows Fall...plus, Cheat @ Wrasslin'

NO JOKE!

DANGER GIRL'S J. SCOTT CAMPBELL SAW HIS FIRST PUBLISHED ART IN THE MAY/JUNE 1989 ISSUE OF *NINTENDO POWER* MAGAZINE. CAMPBELL WON A CONTEST BY CREATING A NEW VIDEO GAME CONCEPT CALLED "LOCKARM."

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS

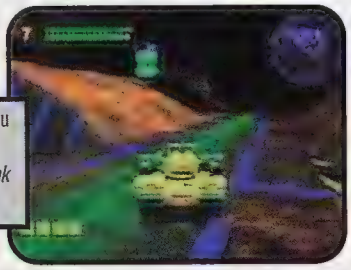
www.gamecave.com

TINY TANK

MANUFACTURER: Sony
PLATFORM: Sony PlayStation
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $44.95, available now

Road rage a problem for you? Wish you drove a tank while stuck in traffic? In *Tiny Tank*, players get that chance. As Tiny Tank, the smart-mouthed title character of this game, players explore extremely complicated and well-rendered levels, exploring canyons, railways and minefields while shooting it out with armed robots, robotic towers and eventually the powerful level bosses.

What makes this game unique is that it conveys the classic tank computer game with modern 3-D graphics and weapons, plus a soundtrack that gives Tiny Tank his unique, human-like personality. *Tiny Tank*'s game play is smooth and energetic, with interesting terrain, lots of color and a multitude of pick-me-ups and enemies. One great feature to the gameplay comes in the form of the two-player deathmatch, where two opposing tanks stalk one another over different backgrounds in an attempt to turn the opponent into so much scrap metal.



TRY IT... If you groove on games like *Ghost in Shell*, *Tiny Tank* will fire you up.

THE FUTURE OF... VIDEO GAMES

BETTER THAN A FORTUNE TELLER

Video game fans ain't gonna be playing their favorite games for long. They'll be *starring* in them instead.

With the current trend in technology, it won't be long before players actually enter video game worlds. Huge advances in CGI (computer-generated imagery) have made major hits out of *Tomb Raider* and *Final Fantasy*, both of which feature extended animated scenes of almost movie-like quality. Combine that with some 3-D virtual reality, and video games leap to the next level.

Remember that silly Nintendo Virtual-Boy helmet from a few years back? Yeah, okay, it bombed, but the idea didn't. Video games in the future will be more like Star Trek's holodeck. Players will actually fight alongside Lara Croft as she travels the world hunting for lost treasure. They'll feel the heat, dodge the bullets and maybe even smell Lara's perfume.

Face it, vid-fans, it won't be long before joysticks go the way of the dodo, and PlayStation or Nintendo go from small consoles to entire rooms in your home.

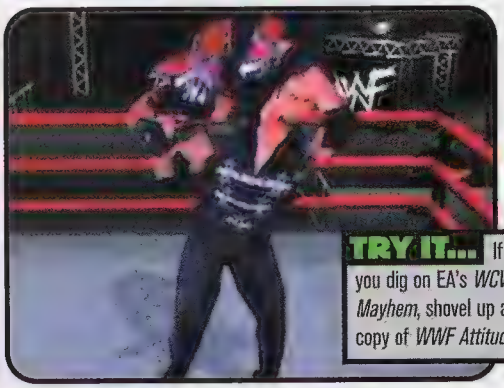
WWF ATTITUDE

MANUFACTURER: Acclaim
PLATFORM: PlayStation and Nintendo 64
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $45.95, available now

WWF Attitude lives up to its bombastic billing. *Attitude* has a custom-wrestler feature and an arena-creation feature in which players can customize an arena, choosing from several WWF logos, ring colors, entrance curtain designs, ring ropes, lights and even different-colored corner pads. There is also a career mode in which a wrestler works his or her way through 20 contenders and multiple title shots which can be saved continuously on memory (see the cheat sheet).

There are tons of cool features on this game, but the Royal Rumble option kicks butt. Players control one of four wrestlers, and each time a wrestler gets eliminated from the ring, a new one enters to take his place. Only one grappler can be crowed King of the Ring, but to do that, he must vanquish 30 foes in this melee of mayhem.

Besides the Royal Rumble, *Attitude* features cage matches; hard-core matches (with a ladder and timekeeper's bell in the ring); tornado matches; tag teams; the eight-man battle royale; and handicap, gauntlet and triple-threat matches. Over 30 WWF stars grace the play of *Attitude*, including such heavyweights as Stone Cold Steve Austin, the Rock, Val Venis and Mankind, to name a few. To keep you working up a sweat, *Attitude* highlights plenty of hidden wrestlers and power moves and offers a blistering commentary by Jerry Lawler and Shane McMahon.



TRY IT... If you dig on EA's *WCW Mayhem*, shovel up a copy of *WWF Attitude*.

SLAM THIS! Mayhem galore captures your attention when you climb in the ring of *WWF Attitude*.

MORE→

NO JOKE!

FORMER *SWAMP THING* ARTIST STEVE BISSETTE GRADUATED FROM THE JOE KUBERT SCHOOL OF CARTOON AND GRAPHIC ART.

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS...

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SHADOW MAN

MANUFACTURER: Acclaim
PLATFORM: Nintendo 64
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $54.95, available now

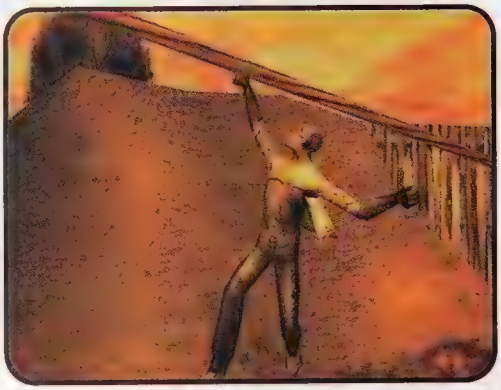
Got the stones to enter the world of *Shadow Man*? Based on the Acclaim comic of the same name, *Shadow Man* tells the story of a the current version of Shadow Man, Mike Leroi, a hero out for revenge on the serial killers who murdered his family. The game involves jumping, running and swimming through dark cityscapes and swamplands while battling monsters and evil creatures from the Deadside (the place where ghosts and spirits gather).

Players must also solve puzzles, such as how to unlock hidden passageways or collect voodoo spells and magic objects.

Mamma Nettie, a powerful, mysterious voodoo priestess, accompanies players on their journey to the Deadside. Throughout the game, she supplies him with valuable suggestions derived from her own magical powers.

With gory battles, hideous ghost and human enemies, and large sprawling levels to explore, *Shadow Man* is an excellent, darkly themed adventure that's a welcome addition to the N64. But be prepared to work—to ultimately complete the adventure, Shadow Man must collect over 100 dark souls to transport back to the Deadside. And it ain't easy, either; killing the supernatural forces often requires multiple gunshots, which translates into some bloody action. Because of the extra violence, *Shadow Man* turns into a more adult-oriented title than the average N64 title. But the game's movie sequences help drive the excellent story, and with both live and dead world areas to battle in, *Shadow Man* will provide many hours of adventure rather than submitting to easy solution. ■

TRY IT... If you like *Turok 2: Seeds of Evil* or even *Mario 64*, this is your bag, *baby!*



LIGHTS OUT *Shadow Man* provides hours of hair-raisin' terror, and plenty of blood to boot!

SPECIAL MOVES & SECRET CODES

CHEATSHEET

WWF ATTITUDE

Wanna put your opponent in traction, or just go for the belt? Use these tips wisely to become king of *Attitude*...

- Win the European Title and Sable and Marc Mero will become available.
- Win the King of the Ring PPV and Taka Michinoku and Kurrgan will become available.
- Win the Summer Slam PPV to unlock Sgt. Slaughter and Shawn Michaels.
- Win the Intercontinental Championship to unlock Jacqueline and China and the Big Head Mode.
- Win the Royal Rumble PPV to unlock Paul Bearer and Jerry "The King" Lawler.
- Win the WWF title to unlock numerous cheats and make Al Snow's mannequin "Head" available as a selectable wrestler

webline

IT CAME FROM THE WORLD WIDE WEB

www.wrestleline.com/
Good rassling Website with frequent updates, match spoilers and backstage gossip.

www.videogames.about.com/
Links to video game sites all over the Web. Try the AARGH U.K. retrogames link.

www.classicgaming.com
A great classic games site. Go to the game-of-the-week index or browse the museum of obsolete hardware.

www.atarihistory.com/mainmenu.html
The Atari Historical Society Website. Check out the Nolan Bushnell letter and the link to the Atari Time Machine.

www.wrestlesite.com/trc/schools.html
America's most respected wrestling schools, with links to the prestigious Monster Factory as well as "Exotic" Adrian Street's Skull Crushers Academy. Wrestling masks and capes for sale here! ■

NO JOKE! FORMER MARVEL EDITOR-IN-CHIEF JIM SHOOTER STARTED WRITING COMICS AT 13. HE WROTE AND DESIGNED COVERS FOR DC COMICS' *LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES*.

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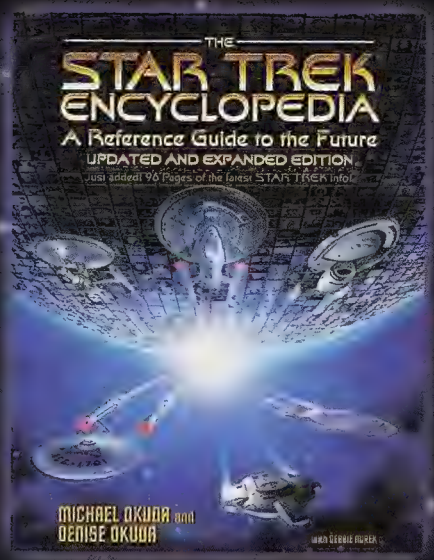

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POCKET BOOKS STAR TREK

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ARIA™ & Angela™

#1

heavenly creatures

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PART ONE OF TWO

FEBRUARY 2000

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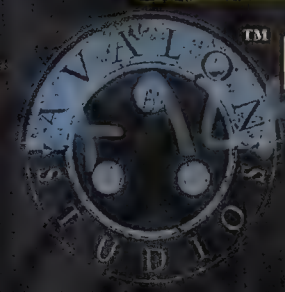
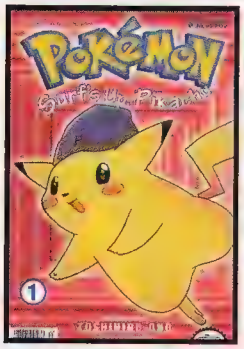


manga MANIA!

COOL JAPANESE COMIC AND ANIMATION STUFF YOU'LL WANT TO BUY...

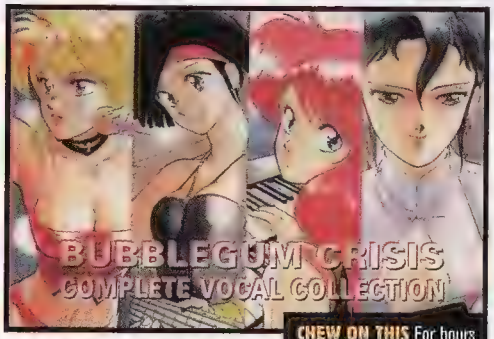
It's time for a roundup of the coolest November-shipping manga/anime products, just in time for Thanksgiving! What turkey dinner would be complete without your bratty little cousins fighting over your new P-chan watch? Remember, though, all manga is in black and white unless we say so. Oh, and save us a drumstick.

BY TOM ROOT



PIKA THE LITTER

Pika-pi! There's more Pokémania this month than you can shake a Jigglypuff at, as the new series *Pokémon: Surf's Up, Pikachu!* #1 hits shelves. Ash and Pikachu visit the Orange Islands—but there's a hungry Snorlax eating up all the chow in sight! The first issue of this four-parter is 56 pages and $3.50. Also this month is *Pokémon Volume 2: Pikachu Shocks Back*, collecting the second manga series, which runs $12.95 for 168 pages. Both are from manga up-and-comer Toshihiro Ono, and both are from Viz Comics. Chu!



CHEW ON THIS For hours of listening pleasure.

CRISIS ON INFINITE DISCS

You've watched the "Bubblegum Crisis" anime and you're thinking, "If only there was some *other* way to enjoy this series." Order up this Bubblegum Crisis Complete Vocal Collection Import CD Set and crank your stereo to 11. This Books Nippon release sports 36 tracks, a 22-page booklet (all in Japanese, of course) and will run you $59.

PROTECTION Always pack heat when you eat lunch.

CATS SCRATCH FEVER

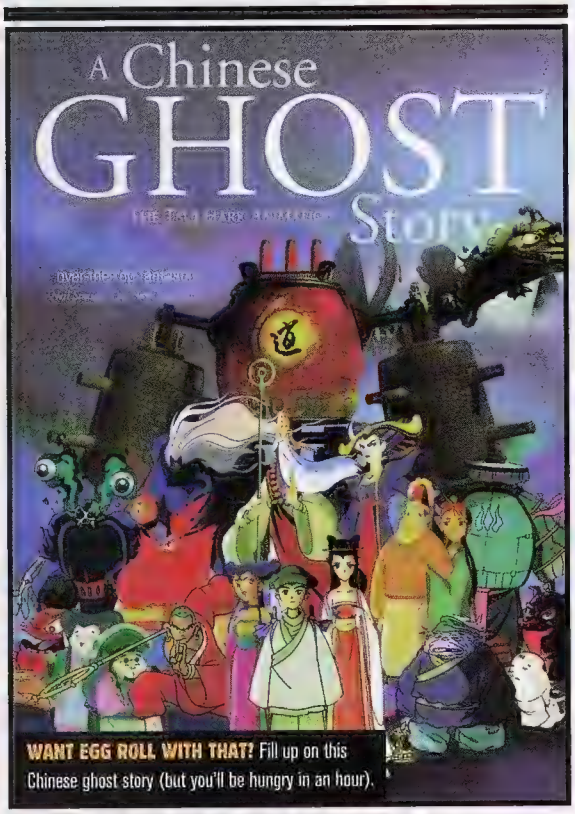
Thinking about getting into Gunsmith Cats, but waiting for the right time to hop aboard? Check out *Gunsmith Cats: Kidnapped* #1, the first in a 10-issue mini-series from manga-maven Kenichi Sonoda. Chicago bounty hunter Rally Vincent has to stake out the home of beloved TV magician Mr. Smart after he jumps bail. But what if Smart's been set up by his wife and her lover? Rally's just the gal to find out, if it weren't for all those crazy dreams she's been having. It's 32 pages, it's $2.95 and it's from those magicians at Dark Horse Comics.

manga MANIA!

PIGGIN' OUT

Hee hee! That stupid Ryoga from "Ranma 1/2" not only has the serious misfortune of turning into a pig when he's splashed with cold water, but he also never has any idea where the hell he's going. Now Ryoga's pig form, P-chan, can wander along with you thanks to this new Seiko Ranma 1/2 P-chan Watch from Viz. The show's title is even snuck into the watch face. It'll run ya $29.99.

TIME TO PIG OUT Dinner time? Check your watch.



WANT EGG ROLL WITH THAT? Fill up on this Chinese ghost story (but you'll be hungry in an hour).

THE GOOD CHINA

Think all the good anime comes from Japan? Well...er...you're pretty much right. But "A Chinese Ghost Story: The Tsui Hark Animation" is a Hong Kong animation effort that's being hailed by critics as an instant classic. Where do you fit in? Well, now you can buy it! It's a love story with demons in it—how can you go wrong? Available from Viz Video, you can get this film dubbed for $19.98 or subtitled for $24.98. Watch it and order in some Chinese.

HOOP DREAMS Mixx Entertainment slam dunks with *Harlem Beat*.

HARLEM SHUFFLE

Think the folks at Mixx Entertainment only care about schoolgirls who transform into magical superheroines named after the planets of the solar system? Guess again! The new Mixx graphic novel *Harlem Beat Pocket Mixx Vol. 3* reprints a full 192-page chunk o' basketball manga, collected from the serialized version in *Mixxzine*. This time around, Nate's in a 3-on-3 basketball tourney, but he's gotta team up with his greatest rival to win! It's $9.95. For 192 pages? How the hell is this company still in business?

NO JOKE! ARTIST TRAVIS CHAREST (*WILDCATS*) DESIGNED PEPSI MAN FOR THE SOFT-DRINK MANUFACTURER'S JAPANESE MARKET.

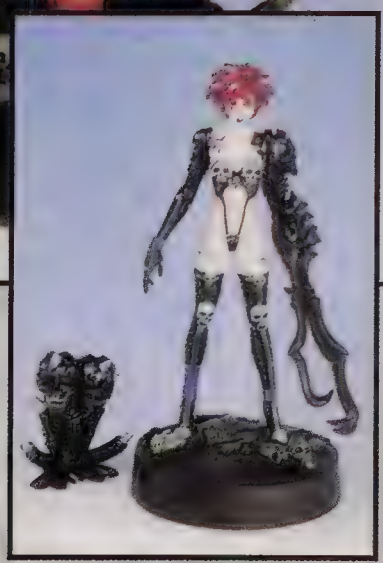
STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS...

HOTIMPORT!!!!!!!

THE COOLEST, BESTEST THING COMING ACROSS THE OCEAN

BEASTLY BABES

Yasushi Nirasawa is known for his creepy creations, and these two 8-inch action figures based on his works are no exception. Punitive Guillotinna comes with a guillotine and base, while Nina Dolono from *Phantom Core* comes with a two-headed demon pal and base. Each figure was sculpted by Toshimitsu Usui and is offered by Fewture Models for $18.98. No collector of creepy chicks (let's hope there aren't *too* many of you out there) can live without 'em.



PHANTOM MENACING
These two hot action figures from *Phantom Core* are frightening...yet strangely exciting.

Pioneer

The epic saga of betrayal, romance, and a klutzy, gluttonous Jr. High School Girl continues!

FUSHIGI YÛGI
THE MYSTERIOUS PLAY

Coming Soon to DVD: Fushigi Yugi's first season (26 episodes) on 4 dual layered discs with extras $199.98! SRP

The Seiryu Seven (V.2) Available this November Dub: $24.98 Sub: $29.98 SRP

Available from these and other fine stores

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manga MANIA!

INU-YASHA IN THE HOUSE

Here's how it works. We say Rumiko Takahashi, you say "Where can I buy that, please?" Whatever manga mega-star Takahashi touches, fans clamor for, and it's no different with *Inu-Yasha*, a fanciful tale of a modern-day girl and her exploits in feudal Japan. *Inu-Yasha Part 4* #1 hits this month, and dog-demon Sesshômaru returns with a mad-on for Inu-Yasha, who kinda cut his arm off a while back. Pick this 40-pager up for $3.25 from Viz Comics. You have no choice.

SWORDPLAY Inu-Yasha cleaves the competition.

DOMINATE ME To hell with Charlie; these chicks are no angels.

2-D MOVIE

The otherworldly babes Compiler and Assembler are Domni-Matrixes, sent from a two-dimensional world to conquer our own beloved Earth. But they end up dating a couple of Earth guys instead. Happy ending? Too bad the Domni-Matrixes' 2-D masters are pissed and feeling violent! "Compiler Volume 2" is anime from ADVision you can take home for $19.98 dubbed, $29.95 subtitled. Now that's deep.

YA KNUCKLEHEAD Ken tries an old Three Stooges move.

DEVIL MAY CARE

Devil Reverse is a mutant freako who's the very personification of Satan—why, he even knows the Arhat Deva Fist, the forbidden martial art! Good thing our hero Ken likes to kick ass. And we mean a *lot* of ass. "Fist of the North Star Vol. 5" presents episodes 13-15 of the fabled TV series. You can pick up this 90-minute bloodbath (and we mean that in a good way) for $19.95 dubbed, $24.95 subbed, from the folks at Manga Video.

THE FUTURE OF...

BETTER THAN A FORTUNE TELLER

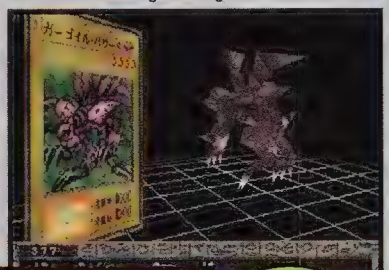
MANGA & ANIME

Apparently, they finally caught 'em all.

Over in Japan, Pokémania's currently losing its luster, bowing to the new sensation: Yugi-Oh Duel Monsters.

While there are no immediate plans to import Yugi-Oh into the U.S., expect the critters to soon march their way into manga fans' hearts...and wallets. Currently, Yugi-Oh video games and collectible trading cards are whipping fans into a major frenzy over in Japan. Game creator Konami Co. recently sponsored a Tokyo tournament which attracted 55,000 fans. The mob was so large and unruly, riot police were called in and the tournament shut down. In its first week alone, Konami's recent video game *Yugi-Oh Dual Monsters II* sold 1 million copies.

With sales like those, Pokémon in the U.S. have more to worry about than just Team Rocket.



YUGI-OH: THE NEXT POKEMON?

YO! Are you a company who sells manga- and anime-related stuff cool enough to make the grade here? Let us be the judges of that. Send any info and/or samples to:

"Manga Mania"
c/o Wizard Entertainment
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

NO JOKE! *JLA* WRITER GRANT MORRISON VISITS THE HIMALAYANS ROUGHLY TWICE A YEAR AND INCORPORATES HIS EXPERIENCES INTO HIS VERTIGO/DC TITLE *THE INVISIBLES*.

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS...

Their World Needed A Savior
They Got DOOM

HEROES REBORN

DOOMSDAY

MARVEL COMICS
WWW.MARVEL.COM

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On Sale November 3rd

On Sale November 10th

On Sale November 17th

THREE Weeks **SEVEN** One-Shots **ONE** Infamous Villain

TOP 10

This list doesn't track the number of copies a specific comic sells each month. It doesn't pay attention to any kind of sales meter. This month, in honor of the new millennium, *Wizard* ranks the worst scenarios a comic fan can look forward to.

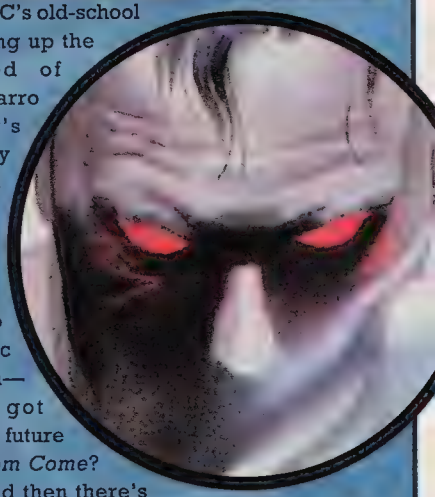
DESOLATE COMIC BOOK FUTURES!

1 DAYS OF FUTURE PAST

This X-Men story is the grand-daddy of 'em all in bleak futures! See, in "Days of Future Past," the Sentinels have taken over America and run the joint like a police state, chucking every mutant they can find in concentration camps. In a last ditch effort to change history, the adult Kate Pryde goes back in time to stop the assassination of Senator Kelly, an anti-mutant legislator. And when the future X-Men try a little uprising, the Sentinels skewer Storm, fry Wolverine right down to his adamantium skeleton and turn Colossus into so much Russian slag. Yikes! The worst crime of all? Marvel trots this storyline out so often that co-creator John Byrne was once heard to muse, "Hasn't that horse been flogged to hamburger?" Why, yes, John. It has.

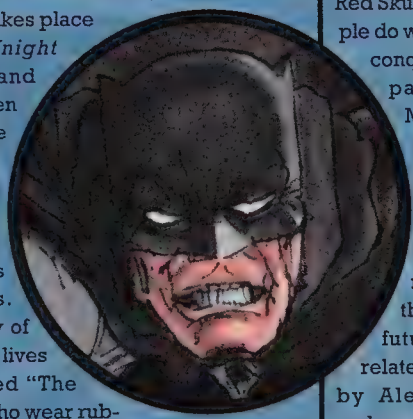
2 KINGDOM COME

Let's see: All of DC's old-school heroes have hung up the spandex, tired of trying to kick Starro the Conqueror's ass for low pay and no thanks. They've been replaced by a batch of savage new-jack "heroes" with no regard for public safety. Oh yeah—and Kansas got nuked. Think the future sucks in *Kingdom Come*? You're right. And then there's the fallout, and we *ain't* talkin' Kansas here. Once all was said and done, creators Mark Waid and Alex Ross got so tied up in deciding who created what in the story, the duo split forever.



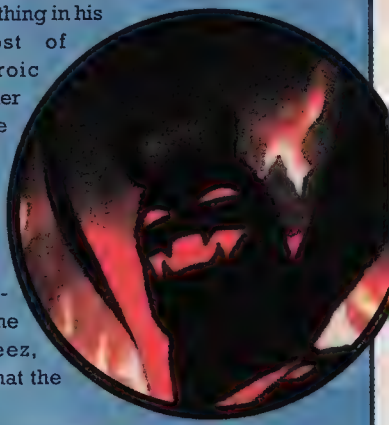
3 THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS

This 1986 Batman mini-series is a classic, but damn!—the world it takes place in *sucks*! In *The Dark Knight Returns*, Batman is old and retired, Superman has been reduced to a lapdog on the government's leash, Gotham City is ruled by viscous street gangs and Catwoman has added about 40 unsightly pounds through the hips. AAAARGH! And indignity of indignities! Richard Nixon lives on through a gang called "The Nixons," with members who wear rubber masks and bad Men's Wearhouse three-piece suits so they can look like the disgraced former president. It's a futuristic nightmare!



4 EARTH X

After an energy experiment went awry, the whole freakin' *world* got superpowers! Sound cool? Not really. See, a new Red Skull has the ultimate power: The ability to make people do whatever he wants. So he's marchin' across America, conquering everything in his path, as most of Marvel's heroic mainstays either side with the Skull or get thumped. Hey! Ever notice that if these desolate futures aren't X-related, they're done by Alex Ross? Geez, makes ya wonder what the guy dreams of.



NO JOKE! FORMER *CATWOMAN* ARTIST JIM BALENT IS A FORMER GRAVEDIGGER, AND HIS UPCOMING *TAROT* SERIES WILL ACTUALLY FEATURE A GRAVEDIGGER CHARACTER.

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS...

5 THE UNITED STATES, IF GEORGE W. BUSH BECOMES PRESIDENT

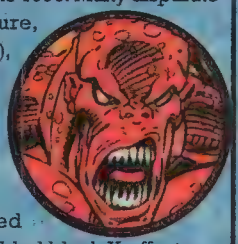
The nation is at peace. We have four ESPN networks to choose from. Unemployment is at a 29-year low. "Beverly Hills 90210" should get canceled any day now. Face facts: America's kickin' ass! The only thing that can screw up this era of good feelings and the most massive economic recovery in this nation's glorious 223-year history? Some big-business butt-kisser like George W. Bush. Don't let it happen. Just say "no" to Republicans.

6 THE GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY'S EARTH-CONQUERED -BY-STUPID-LOOKING-'BADOON'-ALIENS

Marvel's *Guardians of the Galaxy* sucked. The team had a cheap Captain America knock-off and a fat guy named Charlie-27. Earth was conquered by a bunch of lizard guys called the Badoon. For those of you scoring at home, this is straight outta the *Cheap Writer's Ploy* textbook: Have lizards conquer Earth and introduce a fat guy named "Charlie" for sympathy. Bleargh.

7 MARVEL 2099

Earth is an environmental ruin. Dr. Doom is President of the United States. The poor have been forced into an underworld existence where merely clinging to life is a struggle. Yep, this happy setting was the backdrop for "Marvel 2099," a family of books that lasted from 1993 to 1996. Many disparate elements made up the "2099" future, including the Good (Spider-Man 2099), the Bad (Ravage—see Mort of the Month) and the Short-Lived (Ghost Rider 2099). The one "2099" upside? Las Vegas is still up and running and open for business! And yes, the "2099" universe included *X-Men 2099* and *X-Nation 2099* for added bleak X-effect.



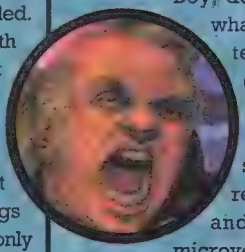
8 FUTURE IMPERFECT

If you're gonna have a war, might as well be a *world* war, right? Right! That's what happened in *Future Imperfect*. After, like, 90% of humanity was wiped out via the ol' nuke route, the last hero standing was the Hulk. Only he wasn't so heroic. Having been made stronger and smarter by additional radiation, the Hulk became—The Maestro! And the Maestro was a tyrannical despot who ruled with the proverbial iron hand, proving that power corrupts and additional radiation makes you a real ass.

9 ROCK OF AGES

This *JLA* #10–#15 storyarc featured the Justice League battlin' Darkseid to save the Earth from a future which Darkseid ruled. The League fought this battle in the future, with part of it in the present, 'cause if they didn't beat Darkseid in the present, they couldn't fight him in the future. And the present Leaguers inhabited their future bodies. Except Batman. Or something. Suffice it say, whenever Darkseid's involved, things are ugly. And writer Grant Morrison was the only one who could understand the damn thing.

10 THE LAST AVENGERS STORY



Boy, do the Avengers suck in this future or what? Pot-bellied Hank Pym organizes a team comprised of retired Avengers (paunch and all) and punk kids to fight off a collection of the team's oldest and deadliest foes. In a two-page span of this enthralling yet depressing read, half the team is dead or maimed and Pym wants to run scared to some microverse. Where the heck is D-Man when you need him?

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MORT OF THE MONTH

ONE LAME-ASS CHARACTER

RAVAGE

From the mind of Stan Lee: Paul-Phillip Ravage was a bigwig at corporate giant Alchemax in Marvel's "2099" future. But when Alchemax betrayed this Ivy-League Mort, he lost his ability to speak (spewing "That garbage truck must'a been here since the turn of the century!") and all fashion sense (An old Chevy hubcap? Tie it to your arm and it's a shield! Woo-hoo!).

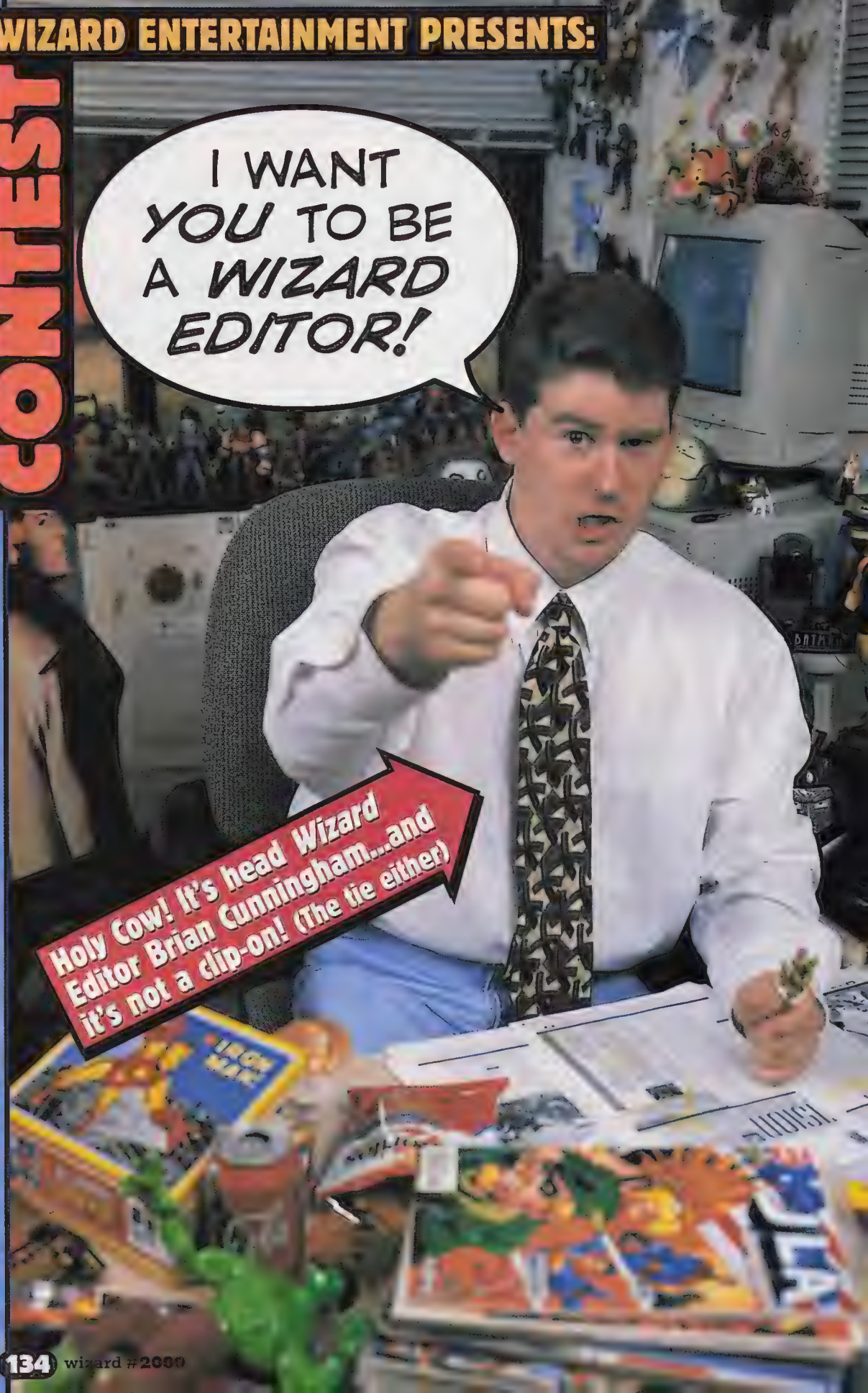
Anyhoo, with a hubcap on his arm and that garbage truck under his butt, our "hero" went on to fight crimes against the environment as...Ravage!

Yes, Ravage was about as lame as a character gets. And with a name like "Paul-Phillip," he was probably French, too.

MORTOMETER

WIZARD ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS:

CONTEST



Holy Cow! It's head Wizard Editor Brian Cunningham...and it's not a clip-on! (The tie either)

PRIZE

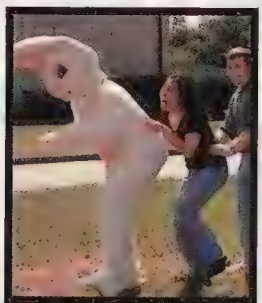
GRAND PRIZE (1): An all-expenses-paid trip to the Wizard Offices where you will spend the day working as an official *Wizard* editor! You'll be part of the team that decides cover art, edits features, writes captions, attends staff meetings and—after a long day of work—hangs with the *Wizard* staff till the wee hours of the night doing all sorts of geeky-cool stuff. Then we fly your ass home the next day.

HOW TO WIN? The real question is why'd you'd *want* to win, but to each their own. Anyway, here's the deal: in a creatively unique way, tell us why YOU'D be the best guest-editor for *Wizard*. Make a video tape, draw a comic strip, write a story, put together a photo essay, compose the Wizard song, whatever; convince us why you're the most-qualified fan to help make *Wizard* funnier, cooler and an all-around more kick-ass magazine. Go crazy with your entry and the one who wows us the most will join the most elite paramilitary force in lower New York State: The Wizard Bullpen.

YOUR PRIZE PACKAGE WILL INCLUDE:

JOIN THE BULLPEN!

INTERVIEW CELEBRITIES!


ANIMAL HUSBANDRY!

AND MORE!

THIS MONTH'S CONTEST IS SPONSORED BY UM...I GUESS THAT WOULD BE US!

SMALL PRINT

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Entertainment, their immediate families and anybody who's easily offended. Dude, we use words like "ass", "bastard" and "trouser-waffle" like normal people say "pass the salt". Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip, e-mail address and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card, and attach the form or card to your entry. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: "Be a Wizard Editor!" Contest, c/o Wizard Entertainment, PO Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries and all rights relating thereto become property of Wizard Entertainment and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. All entries must be received at contest headquarters by December 26, 1999. Wizard Entertainment is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. If the winner ends up contracting some horrible virus while using the Wizard restrooms, well, tough. Feel our pain! Winners will be selected based on originality and creativity or by random drawing by Wizard Entertainment. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Winners will be notified no later than January 31, 2000. If an entrant, having been declared as a winner, does not accept the prize or if either the prize or prize notification is undeliverable, another entry will be selected. In the event that a prize is not available or it becomes impossible for the sponsor to award the prize which has been designated, the sponsor retains the right to substitute a prize or product of equal value to the winner. Determination of whether a prize or product is of equal value is in the sole discretion of the sponsor. Winning entries will be selected on or about January 10, 2000.

For a list of winners, available after January 10, 2000, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: "Be a Wizard Editor!" Winners List, c/o Wizard Entertainment, PO Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118

All photos by Paul Schuraldi

ENTER NOW!

Just fill out the below form, drop it and your entry into an envelope/box/crate (whatever) and mail the whole thing off to:

Be a Wizard Editor Contest
c/o Wizard Entertainment,
P.O. Box 118,
Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Be a Wizard Editor Contest Entry Form

CONTEST DEADLINE DECEMBER 26, 1999!

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

picks

THE BIG BUZZ COMICS SHIPPING IN NOVEMBER

book of the month

UNCANNY X-MEN #376

MARVEL Boo-yah! The mystery of "The Twelve," a buncha mutants destined to clobber Apocalypse and save the planet, has gone on longer than a Jerry Lewis telethon. Now, in *Uncanny #376*, the Twelve stand revealed! "It's gonna be a great payoff," says assistant X-editor Pete Franco. "Each one of the people that is picked has a certain ability that is going to be used in the upcoming tribulations." By Alan Davis, Adam Kubert and Tim Townsend. The story continues over in *Cable #75*. $1.99—*Uncanny X-Men*, *X-Men*; $2.99—*Cable*

AQUAMAN #63

DC COMICS Pass the cigars—Dolphin gives birth to Tempest's baby! And there to celebrate is new writer Dan Jurgens, who swims aboard with this ish. He's not givin' Aquaman and Tempest any time to play with the little tadpole, though—Atlantis is attacked by a powerful new enemy, and Aquaman declares all-out war. By Jurgens, Steve Epting and Norm Rapmund. **$1.99**

ASTRO CITY #20

WILDSTORM/DC Ex-con Steeljack finally confronts the Conquistador and his fear of failure. Good. So far he's such a loser he oughtta be flipping burgers at Burger-O-Rama. The washed-up crook has to stop Conqy from vanquishing his old evil allies. Friends until the end, we suppose. You want more? How about the Black Mask Killer unmasked? By Kurt Busiek, Brent Anderson and Will Blyberg. **$2.50**

AVENGERS #24

MARVEL Juggernaut turns to the Earth's Mightiest for help in stopping the god-like Exemplars from kicking his sizable ass. Reminds us of those cretins in grade school who loved to dunk your head in the toilet, but when math got too hard for them, hoo boy...they were your best friend. *Avengers* scribe Kurt Busiek ain't tellin' if the Avengers help Juggie or not: "Considering large parts of the city are being destroyed by the Exemplars, the Avengers' reaction to it is something people should pick up the book to find out," he says. By Busiek, George Pérez and Al Vey. **$1.99**

BATMAN BOOKS

DC COMICS "No Man's Land" is wrapping up—good thing, too, since the Bat-people have started to run out of good stories. In *Legends of the Dark Knight* #125, Batman considers revealing his secret ID to get Jim Gordon back on his side after their falling out. *Shadow of the Bat* #93 has Gotham preparing for an urban war, while someone is revealed to be the moneybags behind Gotham's possible reconstruction. Finally, in *Batman* #573 and *Detective Comics* #640 ("Shellgame"), the Joker and Harley Quinn throw a wrench into plans to salvage the city. A pointy-eared team brings it all to you at just **$1.99 each.**

AS PER HIS WISHES, LATE MARVEL EDITOR-IN-CHIEF AND WRITER MARK GRUENWALD'S ASHES WERE MIXED INTO THE INK OF THE FIRST PRINTING OF THE *SQUADRON SUPREME* TRADE PAPERBACK.

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS...

BATMAN: DARK VICTORY #2 (OF 13)

DC COMICS The holiday killer does us all a favor and tries to off the Riddler, but the giggling fool manages to escape. Batman is sure the criminal can provide some clues, but Riddy wants no part of it and turns tail. Dumb move, Riddler. He'll catch you, and you'll be sorry. By Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale. **$2.95**

BATMAN: WAR ON CRIME

DC COMICS What can two talented fellas (Paul Dini and Alex Ross, natch) do to top last year's acclaimed *Superman: Peace on Earth* graphic novel? Why, whip one up starring Batman, of course. In this lavishly painted piece, Batman considers what drives him to fight the criminal element after he rescues an orphan. Wonder if the little fart reminds him of anyone? By Dini and Ross. **$9.95**

CAPTAIN AMERICA #25

MARVEL "I'm seeking to define Captain America for myself as well as the readers," raps Dan Jurgens, who takes over *Cap* with this issue. "We're going to deal with the fact that Nick Fury had died a couple of years ago, and is now back among the living." If that isn't heavy enough for you, Jurgens also plans on bringing back Hate Monger and the Falcon, too. By Jurgens, Andy Kubert and Dan Green. **$2.99**

CAPTAIN MARVEL #1

MARVEL Once you took enough aspirin, *Avengers Forever* wasn't so bad, was it? The fun continues with this brand-new *AF* spinoff. "He is fighting to protect Los Angeles from a monstrous menace, which unfortunately he is the only one able to see," explains writer Peter David. "Consequently, what the good people of L.A. see is this individual going berserk and blasting apart entire city blocks. He

newreleases

FIRST TIME OUT

ANGEL #1 (Dark Horse) The 'Buffy' hunk leaves Sunnydale and becomes a paranormal investigator in L.A. Have the Ghostbusters heard about this? $2.95

ATOMIC TOYBOX #1 (Image) Young Ken Logan uses Dad's gift of alien technology to conjure up any adventure he wants. $2.50

BATMAN/DAREDEVIL (DC) These two are both usually pretty fearless. But what if they have to fight the Scarecrow and the Kingpin? $5.95

BATMAN: DOA (DC) The Dark Knight has 24 hours to find an antidote to the lethal poison in his system. $6.95

BEAST BOY #1 (DC) The Titans' Changeling returns to L.A. (and his old Doom Patrol name) to reclaim his fame and fortune. $2.50

DANGER GIRL SPECIAL #1 (WildStorm/DC) It's a "flip" book with two covers by J. Scott Campbell, Andy Hartnell, Joe Chiodo and Art Adams. $3.50

DEMONSLAYER #1 (Image) Hot chick is believed dead, and bereaved boyfriend makes pact with devil to bring her back. Never a good idea, even if she's cute. $2.95

GEN13: A CHRISTMAS CAPER (WildStorm/DC) It's li'l Gen13! The tykes and future nymphos foil a plan to kidnap Santa Claus. $5.95

HIEROGLYPH #1 (OF 4) (Dark Horse) A human explorer uncovers long-buried secrets during a trek to a remote alien planet. $2.95

LADY DEATH VS. PURGATORI #1 (Chaos!) The Queen of Blood and Death's Chosen Avatar lead their armies into battle. Winner gets all the silicone. $3.50

LADY PENDRAGON: ORIGIN OF MERLIN #1 (Image) The inside poop on the world-famous sorcerer! Egyptian god Anubis lays down the skinny. Plus: 15 new characters debut. $2.50

NINE RINGS OF WU-TANG #1 (Image) Only one group of misfits can wield martial arts, magic and sampled beats with equal skill...enter the Wu-Tang Clan! $2.95

PATRIOTS #1 (WildStorm/DC) International Operations soldiers tidy up some unfinished business. $2.50

PROPHET: LEGACY #1 (Awesome) The daughter of John Prophet carries on her father's tradition of kicking ass and offerin' variant covers. $2.99

SPIDER-MAN UNLIMITED #1 (Marvel) This series, set in an alternate earth and starring our favorite web-spinner, ties in to the new animated series. $2.99

STAR TREK: VOYAGER—FALSE COLORS (WildStorm/DC) Seven of Nine gets wrapped up in Borg business. Uh, we'll volunteer to do the wrapping. $5.95

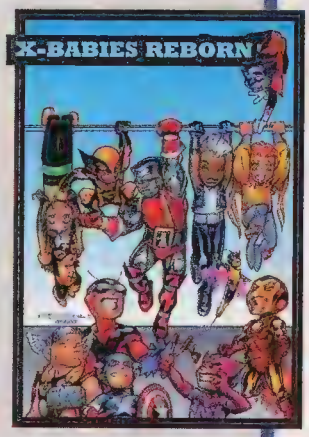
STRANGE KISS #1 (Avatar Press) A murder-suicide. Men pregnant with aliens. Kisses with tongue. Warped Warren Ellis goes editor-free in this book. $3.00

SUPERMAN, INC. (DC Comics) An "Elseworlds" tale that ponders what life would be like for Supes if he were a sports hero. $6.95

UNITY 2000 #1 (Acclaim) Jim Shooter and Jim Starlin unite the original Valiant Universe with the modern Acclaim one. $2.50

X-BABIES REBORN (Marvel) Wolvie, Creepy Crawler, and Shadowkitty are some of the X-Babies in this cash-in-before-it's-too-late one-shot. $3.50

X-MEN: HELLFIRE CLUB #1 (OF 4) (Marvel) The history of this evil clan of mutants who think they're better than you is finally revealed. $2.50



MR TITLES DENOTED WITH AN MR CONTAIN MATERIAL THAT'S SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS.

perceives himself as a hero, they perceive him as a villain." Marvel promises a secret in this issue worthy of the *Thunderbolts* #1 shocker (No, CM is not really Stilt Man in disguise—we checked). By David and Chriscross. **$2.50**

DAREDEVIL #11

MARVEL Wanna know why you never date a superhero? Well, this ish is chock fulla answers, as DD takes some comely lass out on the town and winds up having to kick ass before dessert arrives. We also doubt he's too enthusiastic about helping the Kingpin, or facing a new foe named Echo. All in all, probably not the kind of action he was hoping for. By David Mack, Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti. **$2.50**

EARTH X #10 (OF 12)

MARVEL Wanna know how the Watcher went blind? Seems he'd mostly been watching a lot of porn. That means he'll miss Captain America throw down with the Skull in this ish, with a little assist from the World Super Powers—think Grade-Z heroes. Paging Brother Voodoo! By Jim Krueger, John Paul Leon and Bill Reinhold. **$2.99**

FANTASTIC FOUR #25

MARVEL Doom never sleeps! Right on the heels of the "Doomsday" event, villain Doctor Doom clashes with the FF in this double-sized smackeroo. And if you think your father is a hard case, just want until you see poor Valeria Von Doom catch up with her dad. He never lets her have friends over to the castle. Or use the time machine. What a rusty hardass. By Chris Claremont, Salvador Larroca and Art Thibert. **$2.99**

what I'm reading

PRO PICKS

PAUL DINI

(Producer of "Batman Beyond," writer of *Batman: War on Crime*, *Batman: Harley Quinn* and *Jingle Belle*)

"Out of habit, I keep up with the Superman/Batman titles, just to see where they are. Anything by Evan Dorkin I think is just wonderful. *Stray Bullets* I like an awful lot. That's like the high point of my monthly reading, the months it comes out. I like all the Oni books. I tend to like more extreme, out-there things. The superhero books, by and large, don't tend to interest me that much."

PHOTO COURTESY OF TOM G. LYNN

FLASH #156

DC COMICS "Guess Who's the Flash?" is a fun game, and we get to keep playing in this issue. Only now there are three Flashes: that mysterious new "Black Flash," and two guys in Wally West's classic red 'n' yellows. Hmm...maybe a couple of them won't make it, since we only need one Flash. By Mark Waid, Brian Augustyn, Paul Pelletier and José Marzan Jr. **$1.99**

HEROBEAR AND THE KID #1

ASTONISH COMICS Need a break from the Hulk-smash-'em-up monotony of superheroes? Give ol' Herobear a try—this looks like a damn good find, sort of *Bone* meets *Calvin and Hobbes*. "I want it to be real nostalgic, kind of remind people a lot of their childhood...something that feels like a 'Wonder Years' or 'Christmas Story' type of tale," says creator Mike Kunkel. Main character Tyler is a little boy who has to deal with your normal childhood issues. You know, stolen lunch money, magic stuffed bears, all that kind of thing. By Kunkel. **$2.95**

HEROES REBORN: DOOMSDAY

MARVEL Sweet gravy on a spoon! Mavel pulls out all the stops in this mega-event that heralds the return of Doom! We at *Wizard* barely escaped with our lives last month, and now the Marvel heroes of two worlds are gonna feel the bang. Yes, *two* worlds: See, Doc Doom has been in the "Heroes Reborn" universe all this time, taking control. Now he wants the original Marvel Earth as another jewel in his scepter. It begins in *Heroes Reborn: Doomsday* and ends two weeks later in *Heroes Reborn: Doom*. In between, sit back and read *HR: Ashema*, *HR: Masters of Evil*, *HR: Rebel*, *HR: Remnants*, and *HR: Young Allies*. By a Doomload of creators chained to their desks. **$1.99 each**

IRON MAN #24

MARVEL Iron Man fights Ultimo this month in "Ultimate Danger," part two of three. Woo-hoo. Not every single issue of Shellhead's can be exciting. Actually, none of them

NO JOKE! *ELFQUEST* CREATORS WENDY AND RICHARD PINI MET THROUGH THE LETTERS PAGE OF *SILVER SURFER* #5, WHEN RICHARD READ ONE OF WENDY'S LETTERS AND RESPONDED DIRECTLY TO HER.

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS...

X-MEN
CAPTAIN MARVEL #1
A NEW SERIES FROM
THE PAGES OF AVENGERS FOREVER!
UNCANNY X-MEN #376
AT LAST: THE TWELVE REVEALED!
MARVEL
NOV 1999
HOT PICKS
FANTASTIC FOUR #25
MR. FANTASTIC VS. DOCTOR DOOM!
'NUFF SAID!
CAPTAIN AMERICA #25
THE FALCON! NICK FURY!
DAN JURGENS! ANDY KUBERT!
MARVEL COMICS
WWW.MARVEL.COM

PETER PARKER #13

have been exciting lately. This month, see ex-Avenger Warbird hit the sauce! See Tony Stark push his armor to the limit! See yourself falling asleep by page four! By Kurt Busiek, Roger Stern, Sean Chen and Rob Hunter. **$1.99**

JINGLE BELLE #1 (OF 2)

ONI PRESS The thought of Santa Claus reproducing is mighty icky, but how else would we get Jingle Belle, the fat man's spunky offspring? Paul Dini (producer of "Batman Beyond") promises a tale that harkens back to those cheery Christmas specials of years past. "The one child in the world Santa does not get along with is his own daughter," explains Dini. "There's an evil being out to destroy Santa, and Jing, to some degree, doesn't really care." But when the evil Blizzard Wizard threatens Christmas, it's Jing to the rescue. By Dini and Stephen DeStefano. **$2.95**

JLA #37

DC COMICS "World War Three," part two of five. While Old God Mageddon unleashes fire and brimstone on our planet, the team is already busy with Lex Luthor's Injustice Gang. What do JLAers get paid for overtime? By Grant Morrison, Howard Porter and John Dell. **$1.99**

M. REX #1

IMAGE We'll let writer Joe Kelly tell you what makes this book cool. "We get to meet these characters who all have converged on this luxury yacht," says the shaved-headed scribe. "Rex is this thief who's been sent to loot the ship, which is hosting this pro-earth group. During the course of his trying to rob them, he accidentally stumbles upon this group called Providence. They're spying, but we don't know exactly who they're spying on..." Sounds good. And after Kelly mentioned the gun-wielding monkey named Bobo, we were sold. By Kelly and Duncan Rouleau. **$2.50**

SPAWN BOOKS

IMAGE Why would any sane man want to trade places with Spawn? Sure, he's got a hot-selling book and a second movie in the works, but...he's dead, for cryin' out loud! But some doofus messing with the occult is dyin' to take Spawny-guy's place in *Spawn* #92. Instead of takin' the deal, Spawn decides to give the guy a personal tour of Hell. By Todd McFarlane, Brian Holguin, Greg Capullo and Danny Miki. Over in *Spawn: The Undead* #6, Spawn goes to Hell again to help a buddy reclaim his dead wife. By Paul Jenkins, Dwayne Turner and Chance Wolf. **$1.95—*Spawn*; $2.25—*Undead***

SPIDER-MAN BOOKS

MARVEL Yeeeah, baby! The Spidey ride at Universal Islands of Adventure kicks ass, and the gift shop sells delicious Spider-cookies with creamy, red icing. Yum. Too bad the books still suck. In *Amazing Spider-Man* #13, MJ will have a coronary if Pete doesn't see her off at the airport, but some super-bad dude wants to occupy his time. By Howard Mackie, John Byrne and Dan Green. Over in *Peter Parker: Spider-Man #13*, Cletus Kasady reunites with the Carnage symbiote. By Mackie, Lee Weeks and Scott Hanna. **$1.99 each**

SUPERMAN BOOKS

DC COMICS Big Blue's real busy this month. The Jeph Loeb-written *Superman* #152 has a guest appearance by Aquaman. In *Adventures of Superman* #574, villain

THE FUTURE OF... COMICS

BETTER THAN A FORTUNE TELLER

Welcome to the Real World. In the next millennium, comics will be hitting the mainstream public hard and heavy on two fronts.

With more Hollywood-type guys like Kevin Smith ("Clerks") and Bob Gale ("Back to the Future") working on comics, the industry could finally break out of the stereotype of mere "kids' stuff." It's in the publishers' hands to woo some big-name talent like Stephen King and John Grisham to comics. And they will. It's a natural progression that can only help the industry.

Second, the ol' Internet will push comics to the next level. "Matrix" comics are already doin' this, with exclusive stories only available on the Web (whatisthematrix.com). Stan Lee Media (StanLeeMedia.net) is following suit with online comics that'll include animation. With unlimited space capabilities, animation and an audience potential in the millions, the Internet will open the comics door to the mainstream public. Let's just hope they walk right in.

KING

COURTESY OF EVERETT COLLECTION

NO JOKE! *DETECTIVE COMICS* WRITER GREG RUCKA HAS TWO *NEW YORK TIMES* BEST-SELLER NOVELS TO HIS CREDIT: THE MYSTERIES "*FINDER*" AND "*KEEPER*."

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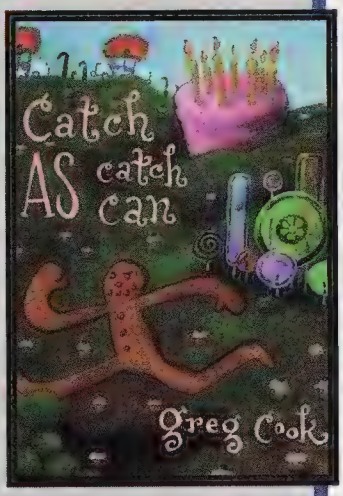
CATCH AS CATCH CAN

HIGHWATER BOOKS There ain't nothing worse than watching a snack treat run away from you. This is the concept behind *Catch as Catch Can*, a 96-page graphic novel that tells the tale of a criminal gingerbread man who drives an ice cream truck. One day he invites the neighborhood kiddies into the truck and gives 'em cigarettes and...stuff. Now the cops are after 'im. What's the worst they can do to him, eat him? Between the high-speed car chases, gingerbread urine and under age sodomy, this one's definitely for mature readers, kiddies. And it's funny as hell. So there. **$9.95**



Obsession believes she's Clark's true bride. In *Superman: Man of Steel* #96, a Kryptonian ancestor asks for Superman's help in rebuilding his home world. Finally, writer Joe Kelly exiles Wonder Woman and Supes to a remote island for a thousand years in *Action Comics* #761. No "Do Not Disturb" sign necessary, eh? **$1.99 each**

THOR #19

MARVEL Thor teams up with his pappy Odin to take down the Enchanters! This title's been slowin' down lately, so root for Goldilocks to hit a home run. Meanwhile, Loki visits the underworld as part of his plan to defeat his hated stepbrother. By Dan Jurgens, John Romita Jr. and Klaus Janson. **$1.99**

TOMB RAIDER #1

TOP COW God bless writer Dan Jurgens. The man has more energy than your average puppy. Besides kicking off a new era for Captain America *and* Aquaman this month *and* tossing evil gods at Thor every month, Jurgens is takin' Lara Croft from video game to comic book stardom. "We send Lara off on a quest with lots of mystery and intrigue with something called 'The Medusa Mask,'" says the J-Man. "Also, it is important to me that she be seen as a real character, someone who's quite human." Plus a few ounces of silicone, Dan. By Jurgens, Andy Park and Jon Sibal. **$2.50**

TOP 10 #5

WILDSTORM/DC Top 10 is number one! Or at least number two, or three, or four...it's tough to decide which of Alan Moore's ABC books is best, they're all so good. Trust us and snap 'em all up. In *Top 10*, the Libra Killer is on the loose, and though Sergeant Caesar is getting closer to nabbing him, he's not behind bars yet. Also, two of the super-cops team up with a super-sized madam named "Large Marge." By Moore, Gene Ha and Zander Cannon. **$2.95**

VERTIGO: WINTER'S EDGE III

VERTIGO/DC When you think holidays, you think Vertigo, right? Us too. Sit by the fire and read a tale about a train wreck that leaves a trail of broken hearts and lives. Then comes a John Constantine story full of warmth...warm blood, that is. Luminaries like Neil Gaiman, Dave Gibbons, Warren Ellis, and Darick Robertson helped craft this masterpiece. Eighty pages for **$6.95.**

WILDCATS #6

WILDSTORM/DC Is it just us, or is this book taking its sweet time to get *anywhere*? And we're not just talkin' 'bout its bimonthly status. Anyway, the 'Cats are after the Kenyan in New York. Grifter has a personal grudge against the guy, and you just know they're not gonna kiss and make up anytime soon. By Scott Lobdell, Travis Charest and Richard Friend. **$2.50**

WITCHING HOUR #1 (OF 3)

VERTIGO/DC You up for a good ol'-fashioned, mysterious-stranger story? Good! Amanda Collins roams the Manhattan streets, looking for people in need of consolation and advice. A blank white business card is what she leaves behind. Guess Kinko's screwed up again. By Jeph Loeb, Chris Bachalo and Art Thibert. **$5.95**

NO JOKE! ARTIST KYLE BAKER HAS DONE REGULAR COMIC STRIPS IN *SPIN* AND NEW YORK MAGAZINES.

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS...

WOLVERINE #146

MARVEL The reverberations of "The Twelve" storyline continue to be felt in here, as Wolvie is kidnapped by Apocalypse's cronies the Horsemen. Who's going to rescue him? Well, Archangel, Jubilee, Nightcrawler and Shadowcat guest-star, if that's a hint. By Erik Larsen, Leinil Francis Yu and Dexter Vines. **$1.99**

X-MEN: THE HIDDEN YEARS #2

MARVEL Remember that time when the X-Men appeared on "American Bandstand"? No? That's cuz for a coupla years the title was in reruns, and when we picked up with 'em later, a lotta time had passed. Here, that lost period is finally revealed. Cyclops, Beast, Iceman and Angel travel to the Savage Land to make sure Magneto is dead—and Marvel Girl ain't. By John Byrne and Tom Palmer. **$2.50**

characterprofile

RAP SHEET

THE PUNISHER

STREET SMART Frank relies on brains as much as brawn. He once lobbed a grenade into a crowd o' perps without pulling the pin. The city boys fell for it and scattered. Maroons. (*Punisher* #6)

HIRED MUSCLE Although Frank is motivated by personal tragedy, he began his career as a professional hitman. His first gig was to whack Spider-Man! (*Amazing Spider-Man* #129)

POOCH LOVER Frank loves dogs and hates to cause them pain. Still, he carries a blowgun that shoots tranquilizer darts in case guard dogs get in his way. (*Punisher* #6)

BULLET-PROOF That's not just cloth, folks. The Punisher's Death's Head costume is actually Kevlar body armor, which saves his bacon on a daily basis.

CLOTHESLINE Frank enjoys stiff-arming his opponents in the face as they run by. His arms are so strong that he once broke a rapist's neck that way. (*Punisher War Zone* #7)

BE PREPARED Frank may not have superpowers, but he's had some kick-ass military training, including SEAL (SEa Air Land), UDT (Underwater Demolition Team) and LRPA (Long Range PAtrol). (*Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe* #8)

SEMPER FI Frank's been awarded the Purple Heart award four times! He was also twice decorated with the Bronze and Silver Star for heroism in the line of duty while a Marine. (*Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe* #8)

DEADSHOT Frank's experimented with a new 5.7 mm weapon that fires through 48 layers of Kevlar. He loved the transparent clip...it let him watch the bullets feed. (*Punisher War Journal* #8)

HOOCHIE MAMA Frank never wore a G-string and garter belts, but he did once pop out of a giant cake. He only did it to kill the groom, though. (*Punisher War Journal* #36)

GET CLOSER When Frank needs to keep silent, he uses brass knuckles for up-close and personal sneak attacks or four-sided throwing stars with razor-sharp edges for air-borne attacks. (*Punisher* #19)

PUGILIST Frank's worn boxing gloves on occasion. When he took down gangster Les Daniels, Frank showed off the boxing skills he picked up in the military. (*Punisher* #21)

ORIGIN

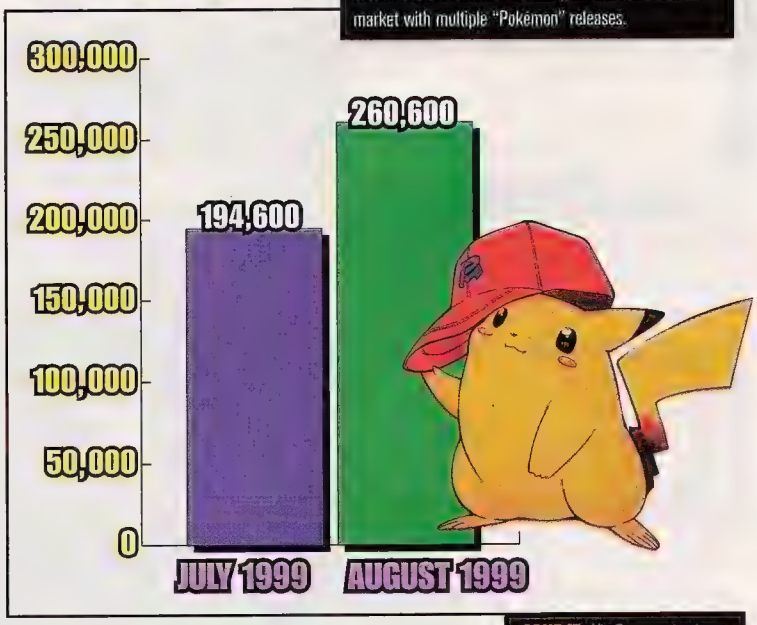
Ex-Marine Captain Frank Castle was living the ultimate suburban fantasy–a wife, two kids and a lovely home in upstate New York–until fate and the Bruno Costa gang stepped in. While visiting Manhattan, Frank's family witnessed a mob killing in Central Park; to stop any witnesses from testifying, Costa's gang brutally gunned down Frank's entire family. When the law couldn't take down the Costa family, Frank eliminated them one by one: Donning a Death's Head costume and some major firepower, he systematically hunted down and killed the Costa family as the first step in his one-man war against evil. Since then, the vigilante Punisher's been a self-proclaimed, tireless enemy of crime.

NOW APPEARING

Writer Garth Ennis promises some serious bloodshed when the *Punisher* mini-series debuts in early 2000. "Our first issue's going to get him back to basics...killing people in really nasty ways," says Ennis. In the early issues, Frank deals with some hitmen that come gunning for him, as well as a few imitators he's inspired. After an appearance by Daredevil in issue #3, the blood really starts flowing. "The fourth issue will be a carnage-packed issue set in the Central Park Zoo, from which the villain of the piece is born," says Ennis. "It's a female character that, by the time the issue is over, will be a pretty memorable character, a major thorn in Frank's side from then on."

COMIC MARKET NEWS AND SUCH by Lars Pearson

MARKET WATCH



PIKA-HUGE! With the "Pokémon" movie set to hit in November, Viz Communications plans to dominate the market with multiple "Pokémon" releases.

SOURCE: Viz Communications

THE MIGHTY QUINN

Joker's gal-pal brings home the loot

She's taking our money, and nobody's complaining. In the asylum-full of Batman characters, Harley Quinn, the Joker's playful little girlfriend, has become a favorite. In fact, with a sizzlin'-hot DC Universe debut in August's *Batman: Harley Quinn* one-shot, Harley might be the most significant character debut of the year. It's a no-brainer that DC will use Harley again. In fact, rumors already swirl that there are plans to debut a *Harley Quinn* monthly series, but *without* Harley's co-creator, writer Paul Dini. Until then, focus your attention on the handful of Harley already out:

BATMAN: MAD LOVE—Harley's 1993 debut in the "Batman Animated" universe is a delicious story from Dini and co-creator Bruce Timm. But while a first print rings up $16, subsequent printings mean you can snare a copy on the cheap.

BATMAN: HARLEY QUINN—Harley's first appearance in the DC Universe generated huge steam. A first print is an easy $7, but multiple printings will probably keep future price boosts minimal.

BATMAN #570, DETECTIVE COMICS #737—This two-part follow-up to *Batman: Harley Quinn* had Harley trying to gain Joker's affections...by ignoring him. Sales showed decent gains from Harley's presence, but price increases are small right now.

BATMAN ADVENTURES: 12-INCH HARLEY QUINN—And if you're a toy geek, watch for this 12-inch gal, already showing prices up to $40. Twelve-inch figures are always scarce, so this could hold its own.

STATUES STAND TALL

For many fans, buying statues defies logic. A collector who will writhe in agony over paying $2 for an X-Men

THE FUTURE OF... THE MARKET

BETTER THAN A FORTUNE TELLER

The No. 1 trend for the 21st century comic market? It's that little thing called the "Internet."

For comic buyers, it's instant access. If you're stranded without a comic shop in Podunk, Iowa, no worries. You've still got access to the sweetest retailers and private collections the world can offer. And with increased competition, deep discounts on new comics are your new reality.

Comic sellers? For the first time in collectible comic history, *you* have the power. Collectors who formerly would have gotten 20 percent of retail for their comics from stores can now get 75 or even 100 percent of guide value through the many online auction services available. Hoo-rah!

Sure, just about everyone (and heck even their mothers) seem to be using the Internet now, but before long, collectors might *have* to Internet-trade or seriously miss out. The benefits are big and all you need is a computer. Embrace it.

NO JOKE! THE VERY FIRST COMIC SERIES SOLD ONLY IN COMIC BOOK STORES (NOT ON NEWSSTANDS) WAS MARVEL'S *DAZZLER* #1 IN 1981.

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS

or Superman comic will gleefully shell out $150 for a finely crafted statue of their favorite character. Because of that feverish mania—and we mean that in a good way—statues are a rock-solid buy, almost guaranteed to never lose value. With DC cranking out gorgeous statues

BUSTS ARE BOOMIN' Statues not only rock, they're a great investment.

month after month and Marvel throwing its hat in the ring from time to time, expect the market to remain strong. Especially:

1991 SANDMAN & 1992 BATMAN (Bowen Designs)—These early offerings were lightly ordered back when the statue market was in its infancy. Today? They sell for about $600 each, hardly a kick in the pants.

NIGHTWING (DC Direct)—This DC "medium size" statue is easily the biggest breakaway of the last six months. Its issue price was a mere $80, but the popularity of the *Nightwing* comic and true-to-life sculpting based on the designs of *Nightwing* artist Scott McDaniel has sent this piece into the $175 neighborhood.

MARVEL MINI-BUSTS (Bowen

PHOTOS: BUSICK, SMITH: HUBERT, ROSS, THURNER, WAUB, QUESADA, ROMITA, STRACZYNSKI BY PAUL SCHMALZ; MORRISON, MOORE BY BOB MARTIN; CAMPBELL BY JOHN W. MCDONOUGH; YU COURTESY OF YU; EVANS BY MAUREEN MCTIGUE; JURGENS, MILLER, SEARS BY AL ORTEGA; ; ELLIS BY STEPHEN ELLISON

TOP 10 CREATORS

FAN FAVORITES

These are the creators the fans crave. Creators whose name on a cover sells the book. *Wizard's* Top Ten Creators lists are derived from a nationwide retailer survey. Artists include pencilers and painters.

WRITERS

1. Kurt Busiek
Iron Man, Avengers

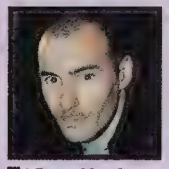
2. Alan Moore
"America's Best Comics"

3. Garth Ennis
Preacher, Hitman

4. Mark Waid
Flash, upcoming: JLA

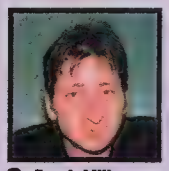
5. Dan Jurgens
Thor, Tomb Raider

6. Kevin Smith
Clerks, Jay and Silent Bob



7. Grant Morrison
JLA, The Invisibles

8. Warren Ellis
Planetary, Transmetropolitan



9. Frank Miller
Sin City: Hell and Back

10. J. M. Straczynski
Rising Stars

ARTISTS

1. George Pérez
Avengers

2. Alex Ross
Earth X

3. Michael Turner
Fathom

4. Adam Kubert
Uncanny X-Men

5. Joe Quesada
Daredevil

6. Leinil F. Yu
Wolverine

7. J. Scott Campbell
Danger Girl

8. John Romita Jr.
Thor, P.P.: Spider-Man

9. Bart Sears
Spider-Woman

10. Keu Cha
Rising Stars

BURIED TREASURE

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THIS

TWILIGHT ZONE #2

J. Michael Straczynski. His name may be damn-near impossible to spell, but man!, can he write a funnybook! Anyhow, Straczynski suddenly finds himself so popular with *Rising Stars* that we're betting fans will take notice of his early comic work in *Twilight Zone* #2, published by the now-defunct Now Comics (Get it? "Now-defunct"...? We crack ourselves up.). This book, currently languishing in quarter bins with the likes of *D.P. 7* #12 and *Team Youngblood* #1, could easily become a hit at both comic and science-fiction conventions when fans figure out it exists. Start looking now, or it could vanish–Dare we say it? We dare!–*into* The Twilight Zone. (Do-do-do-do, do-do-do-do). ■ **LP**

Designs)—Last month, we told you in "Net Gains" how the Iron Man and Deadpool mini-busts were cruising at $60. This month, the short-ordered Cyclops and Ant-Man blasted past $70. The reasons: They look cool, and the production run on Bowen's Marvel mini-busts are kept strictly to initial orders.

'RISING STARS'...RISING!

Burn, baby, burn! Brand-new *Rising Stars* has exceeded high expectations and quickly scorched retailers with hot sales, giving Top Cow another solid hit—so solid, that *Rising Stars* #1 went into a second printing two weeks after release. Much of the pull comes from writer/creator J. Michael Straczynski, who has amassed a following from his "Babylon 5" TV show. But as with many things milked from the Cow, there are a bunch of variants:

RISING STARS Preview—A regular version of this gets you about $6, but a gold foil version nets $10. Top Cow also made a foil edition for 1999's Orlando MegaCon, and that's $14 and climbing.

KEEPS RISIN' With *Rising Stars*, Top Cow and Straczynski have a sizzler on their hands.

RISING STARS #0—At the risk of tooting our own horn, the *Rising Stars* #0 polybagged with the *Wizard*-produced *Fathom* special seems quite a hit. It's a hot $4 mover, not bad for an in-the-bag freebie.

RISING STARS #1—This $2.50 cover-priced book had four variant covers by series penciler Keu Cha shipped in equal quantities. Considering it was well printed in the first place—and then had a second printing—its guide price of $4 is very impressive.

RISING STARS #1 Holofoil—The money shot. Retailers received one of these for every 50 copies of *Rising Stars* #1 they ordered. So the bigger retailers with more stock on hand will probably let you have one for $35. But a smaller retailer who got only one holofoil will probably ask $50. And get it.

"Getting it" has always been something of a problem for Wizard Price Guide Manager Lars Pearson. But he's learning.

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& Sportscards
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Los Angeles, CA 90046
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NO JOKE!
THE HULK STARTED OUT GRAY, BUT THEN-MARVEL EDITOR STAN LEE DECIDED TO SHIFT IT TO GREEN IN *INCREDIBLE HULK* #2 WHEN IT WAS DISCOVERED THAT GRAY DIDN'T PRINT WELL.
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TOP 10 comics

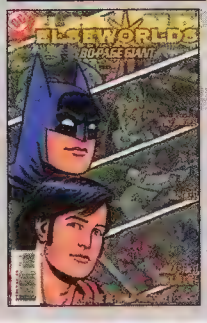
***Wizard*, by staying in touch with hundreds of retailers throughout the country, keeps a close eye on the country's hottest back issues. These are the books ringing the registers this month...**

1 RISING STARS #1

WRITER: J. Michael Straczynski
ARTISTS: Keu Cha and Jason Gorder

So what makes *Rising Stars* #1 the top back-issue comic of the month? Math. See, Top Cow printed 100,000 freakin' copies of the sucker, and when those sold out to the bare walls, the Cow did a second printing. There are enough copies for every comic-collectin' man, woman, child and cocker spaniel to have one, and it's *still* movin' up in price. Now that's impressive. Guess the book itself is a rising star, huh? **LAST MONTH: N.R. (NOT RATED)**

2 ELSEWORLDS 80-PAGE GIANT #1



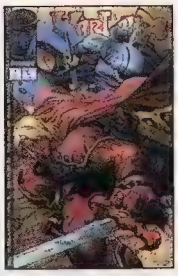
WRITERS: Lotsa guys
ARTISTS: Lotsa other guys

If ya can't get a writer with a huge TV following like J. Michael Straczynski, there's another way to create a sensation: Burn your own comic! When DC Comics' top brass saw a baby in a microwave and a naked Batman (True!) in this book, they decided to shred all copies. All, that is, except for 2,000 already shipped to the United Kingdom. Now, the book's a serious rarity and a $100+ item. And the Brits, they *like* their Batman naked. **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

3 TOP TEN #1

WRITER: Alan Moore
ARTISTS: Gene Ha and Zander Cannon

Firepower. That's what *Top Ten*'s got. The cast of this ABC book are the cops of the tough-as-balls Neopolis City 10th precinct. Alan Moore is the hottest writer on Earth. Gene Ha is the most amazing penciler you've ever seen. And with that Zander Cannon, you can take out half of Starfleet! **LAST MONTH: N.R.**



4 WARLANDS #1

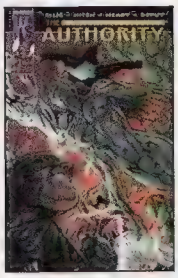
WRITERS: Pat Lee and Adrian Tsang
ARTISTS: Pat Lee and Alvin Lee

What happens when the futuristic art stylings of Pat Lee meet the medieval "Dungeons and Dragons" setting of *Warlands*? You get a big friggin' mess. You also get a comic that everyone seems to want, 'cause Pat Lee is currently bigger than the Beatles. Well, definitely bigger than Ringo. **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

5 LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMEN #1

WRITER: Alan Moore
ARTIST: Kevin O'Neil

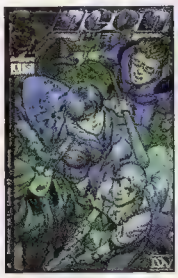
A writer with a beard that could house 12 homeless vagrants met an artist whose biggest prior credit was *Marshall Law*. They did a comic about Captain Nemo, Allan Quatermain and those other guys who put you to sleep in junior high...and the book's a hit! Next: The perpetual motion machine. **LAST MONTH: 4**



6 AUTHORITY #1

WRITER: Warren Ellis
ARTISTS: Bryan Hitch and Paul Neary

We got a problem with authority, man! We're *Wizard*! We're full of cheese and flatulence and we don't *listen* to the Man! So you better step off! In fact, the only *Authority* we'll take any lip from is this superteam written by Warren Ellis. 'Cause if we give Warren any crap, he'll eat our livers. **LAST MONTH: N.R.**



7 NEON CYBER #1

WRITER: Adrian Tsang
ARTISTS: Lou Kang and Arnold Tsang

And if ya can't get a Pat Lee book, maybe you can at least get one by his buddies at Dreamwave Productions. This one looks to the future, as opposed to *Warlands*' look to the past. Ain't that bright and shiny and optimistic? Just like porn. For more information, *do not* go to www.neoncyber.com. It's just more Internet porn. **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

8 AWESOME ADVENTURES #1

WRITER: Alan Moore, again
ARTISTS: Steve Skroce and Larry Stucker

Did we mention that Alan Moore is bigger than even Pat Lee? And that his beard is bigger than Ringo Starr? Then it's easy to figger that everything Alan is coming up roses these days. And this sucker had a print run of, like, 4 1/2 copies. Look for Moore to do a psychedelic cartoon musical next. **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

9 THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT #1

WRITER: Jen Van Meter
ARTISTS: G. Davis, T.L. Edwards, B. Mireault

Damn "Blair Witch" punks! Ya can't even *go* to the woods anymore. There's no peace thanks to all the film crews! Every jerk with a hand cam and an art degree thinks he's gonna get famous. And the comic? Instant sellout, $15 overnight. Can't even *go* to the comic store anymore! **LAST MONTH: 1**

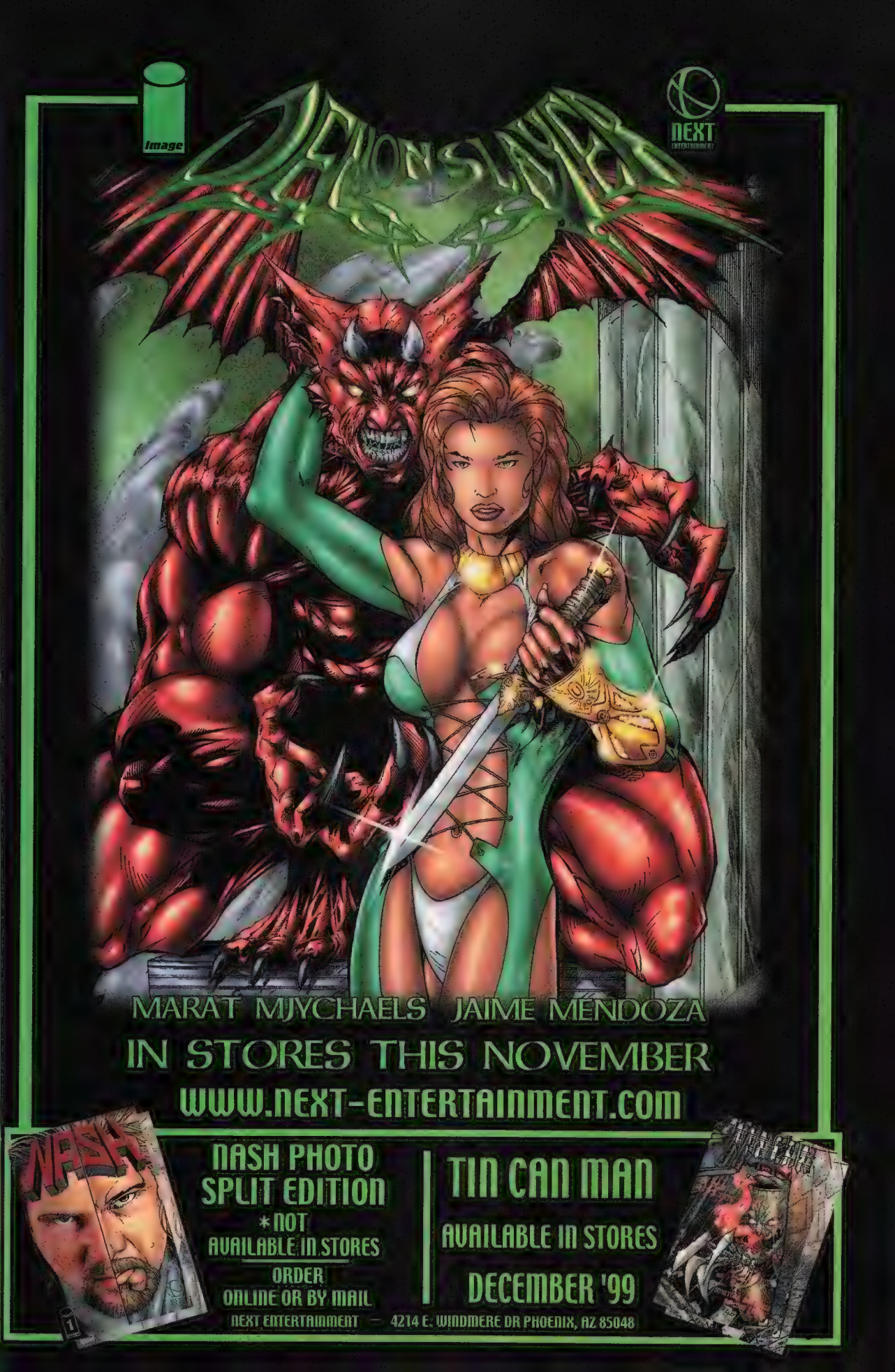
10 BATMAN: HARLEY QUINN #1

WRITER: Paul Dini
ARTISTS: Yvel Guichet and Aaron Sowd

So it only took *four years* for DC Comics to introduce Harley Quinn, everyone's favorite psycho-cutie, into their li'l universe. When they did, the book and the character became an overnight sensation. Duh. **LAST MONTH: 3**

NO JOKE! BACK IN THE '70S, MARVEL CHANGED THE BLACK PANTHER'S NAME TO THE BLACK LEOPARD SO PEOPLE WOULDN'T CONFUSE HIM WITH THE MILITANT BLACK ORGANIZATION.

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS...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THE HIGHEST-ORDERED BOOKS FOR THE MONTH OF **SEPTEMBER**

TOP 100

Compiled by the *Wizard* Price Guide staff using data supplied by Diamond Comic Distributors

Colossus takes on his evil brother Mikhail Rasputin in *Uncanny X-Men #374.*

1. Uncanny X-Men #374 (Marvel)
2. X-Men #94 (Marvel)
3. JLA #35 (DC)
4. Spawn #90 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
5. Avengers #22 (Marvel)
6. Wolverine #144 (Marvel)
7. Daredevil #9 (Marvel)
8. Earth X #8 (Marvel)
9. Astonishing X-Men #3 (Marvel)
10. X-Men: Children of the Atom #1 (Marvel)
11. Thor #17 (Marvel)
12. Amazing Spider-Man #11 (Marvel)
13. Peter Parker: Spider-Man #11 (Marvel)
14. Fantastic Four #23 (Marvel)
15. Day of Judgment #1 (DC)
16. Iron Man #22 (Marvel)
17. Captain America #23 (Marvel)
18. Avengers Forever #12 (Marvel)
19. Day of Judgment #2 (DC)
20. Day of Judgment #3 (DC)
21. Day of Judgment #4 (DC)
22. Day of Judgment #5 (DC)
23. Mutant X #14 (Marvel)
24. Wildcats #5 (WildStorm/DC)
25. Avengers: Domination Factor #1.2 (Marvel)
26. Batman #571 (DC)
27. Rising Stars #2 (Top Cow/Image)
28. Fantastic Four: Domination Factor #1.1 (Marvel)
29. JSA #4 (DC)
30. Detective Comics #738 (DC)
31. Spawn the Undead #4 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
32. Witchblade #35 (Top Cow/Image)
33. Hulk #8 (Marvel)
34. Contest of Champions II #5 (Marvel)
35. Avengers #1 1/2 (Marvel)
36. Bishop: The Last X-Man #2 (Marvel)
37. Spawn: The Dark Ages #7 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
38. Green Lantern #118 (DC)
39. Generation X #57 (Marvel)
40. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #123 (DC)
41. X-Force #96 (Marvel)
42. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #91 (DC)
43. Nightwing #37 (DC)
44. The Darkness #27 (Top Cow/Image)
45. Inhumans #11 (Marvel)
46. Astro City #19 (WildStorm/DC)
47. Gambit #10 (Marvel)
48. X-Men: True Friends #3 (Marvel)
49. Cable #73 (Marvel)
50. Sin City: Hell and Back #3 (Dark Horse)
51. Thunderbolts #32 (Marvel)
52. Cable #72 (Marvel)
53. Juggernaut: The Eighth Day (Marvel)
54. Titans #9 (DC)
55. Flash & Green Lantern: The Brave & the Bold #2 (DC)
56. Fantastic Four 1999 (Marvel)
57. JLA 80-Page Giant #2 (DC)
58. Batman: Day of Judgment (DC)
59. Superman #150 (DC)
60. Preacher #55 (Vertigo/DC)
61. Fantastic Five #2 (Marvel)
62. Flash #154 (DC)
63. X-Man #57 (Marvel)
64. JLA: Superpower (DC)
65. Spider-Girl #14 (Marvel)
66. Aria #7 (Avalon/Image)
67. Wild Thing #2 (Marvel)
68. Top Ten #3 (WildStorm/DC)
69. Batman & Superman: World's Finest #8 (DC)
70. Divine Right #12 (WildStorm/DC)
71. Action Comics #759 (DC)
72. Adventures of Superman #572 (DC)
73. Spider-Woman #5 (Marvel)
74. Galactus: The Devourer #3 (Marvel)
75. Superman: The Man of Steel #94 (DC)
76. Superman: The Man of Tomorrow #15 (DC)
77. New Warriors #2 (Marvel)
78. Warlands #2 (Image)
79. Xena: Warrior Princess #1 (Dark Horse)
80. Promethea #4 (WildStorm/DC)
81. Sam and Twitch #2 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
82. Young Justice #14 (DC)
83. Robin #70 (DC)
84. X-Force 1999 (Marvel)
85. Buffy the Vampire Slayer #13 (Dark Horse)
86. Tales of the Witchblade #8 (Top Cow/Image)
87. Tomorrow Stories #2 (WildStorm/DC)
88. Batman/Tarzan: Claws of Catwoman #1 (Dark Horse)
89. KISS: The Psycho Circus #24 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
90. Tenth: Evil's Child #1 (Image)
91. Black Panther #12 (Marvel)
92. Deadpool #34 (Marvel)
93. Star Wars #10 (Dark Horse)
94. Catwoman #74 (DC)
95. Gen^{13} #45 (WildStorm/DC)
96. Avengers: United They Stand #1 (Marvel)
97. Authority #7 (WildStorm/DC)
98. Day of Judgment Secret Files #1 (DC)
99. Pokémon: Electric Pikachu Boogaloo #3 (Viz)
100. Crimson Sourcebook #1 (WildStorm/DC)

NO JOKE!

DEATHLOK WRITER JOE CASEY GOT HIS START IN COMICS WHEN HE WAS RECOMMENDED TO MARVEL EDITORS BY *CABLE* WRITER JAMES ROBINSON. ROBINSON FREQUENTED A BOOKSTORE WHERE CASEY WORKED AS A CLERK.

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS...

TOP 100 HIGHLIGHTS

'X' ALWAYS MARKS THE SPOT

Marvel's X-Men books (Nos. 1, 2, 9, 10)

Build more X's and fans will *still* come. Four of the top 10 slots this month are occupied by straight X-Men books–and X-Member *Wolverine* and the unrelated *Earth X* chime in, too. The Marvel war machine–running on that X-Men fuel–has comics in a hammerlock with *eight* of the top 10 slots this month. As other books flatten out (see *Spawn* below), Marvel's dominance may become even more pronounced.

JLA #35/Spawn #90 (Nos. 3, 4)

Hey! *Spawn* usually has the No. 3 slot all locked up. But it would appear that diminishing interest has finally dented Spawny-guy. Granted, *JLA* #35 was a key part of the "Day of Judgment" crossover, but these books are a statistical dead heat. In fact, *Spawn* is a whisker away from being overtaken by *Avengers*. It's a race to watch next month.

Thor #17 (No. 11)

We say thee–yea! *Thor* previously struggled as Marvel's *lowest*-selling "Heroes Return" title, but has risen to become the second-highest "Return" book, right behind *Avengers*. This month, ol' Goldilocks got help as part of "The Eighth Day" crossover. But *Thor*'s fan-fave creative team of writer Dan Jurgens and penciler John Romita Jr. are keeping readers coming back month after month.

Day of Judgment #1-#5 (Nos. 15, 19-22)

Hellfire! A damn good showing from a mini-series, especially one driven by two unknowns–writer Geoff Johns and penciler Matt Smith. Of course, it likely helped that DC *strongly* hinted–without actually announcing–that this series would see the return of the late Hal Jordan (a much-beloved former Green Lantern) to the DC Universe.

JLA Stuff (Nos. 57, 64)

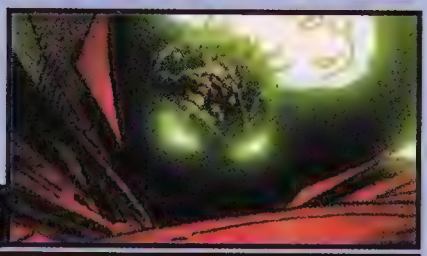
DC turns out lots of big-ticket books, and few do better than the JLA spinoffs. This month, *JLA 80-Page Giant* and the one-shot *JLA: Superpower* ranked midway on the charts, but their respective $5 and $6 price tags made DC big money. Hell, among *all* product sold by Diamond Comic Distribution–including action figures, statues, videos and beef jerky–*Superpower* ranked No. 5 in moolah, while *80-Page Giant* was No. 9.

Xena: Warrior Princess #1 (No. 79)

The "Xena" TV show *still* has a following that just won't quit. In fact, Topps Comics' previous *Xena* comics are showing increased back-issue activity, more than a year after the series was canceled. Our best guess: At No. 79, this book is underordered. Don't miss out.

CLOSE-UP LOOK

Break it on down now! Here's a look at the top-selling books in a couple categories, with their overall Diamond Comic Distributors "Top 300" rankings in parentheses.



SPAWNING GROUND Spawn is slipping a bit, but Image Comics is still the spawning ground.

TOP 10 IMAGE BOOKS

1. Spawn #90 (No. 4)
2. Rising Stars #2 (No. 27)
3. Spawn the Undead #4 (No. 31)
4. Witchblade #35 (No. 32)
5. Spawn the Dark Ages #7 (No. 37)
6. The Darkness #27 (No. 44)
7. Aria #7 (No. 66)
8. Warlands #2 (No. 78)
9. Sam and Twitch #2 (No. 81)
10. Tales of the Witchblade #8 (No. 86)

TOP 10 MONEY-MAKING BOOKS

1. X-Men #94 (No. 2, Marvel, $2.99)
2. JLA: Superpower (No. 65, DC, $5.95)
3. Uncanny X-Men #374 (No. 1, Marvel, $1.99)
4. Earth X #8 (No. 9, Marvel, $2.99)
5. JLA 80-Page Giant #2 (No. 59, DC, $4.95)
6. X-Men: Children of the Atom (No. 10, Marvel, $2.99)
7. Daredevil #9 (No. 7, Marvel, $2.50)
8. Astonishing X-Men #3 (No. 9, Marvel, $2.50)
9. Day of Judgment #1 (No. 15, DC, $2.95)
10. Avengers Forever #12 (No. 18, Marvel, $2.99)

LOOKING BACK

What topped the charts FIVE YEARS AGO?

1. X-Men #40 (Marvel)
2. Spawn #26 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
3. Uncanny X-Men #320 (Marvel)
4. Generation X #3 (Marvel)
5. Rogue #1 (Marvel)
6. Wolverine #89 (Marvel)
7. WetWorks #4 (WildStorm/Image)
8. WildC.A.T.s #15 (WildStorm/Image)
9. Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers #1 (Hamilton)
10. Bishop #2 (Marvel)

POWER DOWN Fads move fast! By the time *Power Rangers* #1 hit, kids were already moving on to, like, Tamagotchi and stuff.

No, you're not seeing double. Five months ago, we talked about how *Power Rangers* #1 from the virtually unheard of Hamilton Comics took the No. 7 slot. The book was delayed–for reasons lost to the mists of time–and this is the resolicit. *This* time, it finally came out. But half a year later, the Power Rangers balloon was already deflating and kids' interest waned. After all, when you have the gore of "Mortal Kombat," what more do you need?

INTERNET REPORT FOR COMPUTER GEEKS EVERYWHERE! by Lars Pearson

'NET GAINS

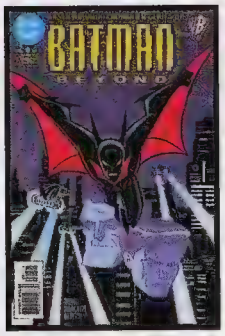
'ELSEWORLDS' A GIANT SELLER

If you ban it, they will come

By now, you've likely heard about DC's *Elseworlds 80-Page Giant* #1, the book recalled by DC at the last minute due to questionable content—except for those 2,000 or so copies already shipped to Great Britain. On the Internet, those copies lagged at $40 because awareness that the item was rare hadn't settled into fans' brains. But as word of mouth did its job, *Elseworlds 80-Page Giant* became a three-digit wonder.

ELSEWORLDS 80-PAGE GIANT #1 Source: eBay.com

ups & downs



GOING UP

The cartoon tie-in *Batman Beyond* #1 surprisingly hit $8, even though DC took a chance and overshipped extra copies of the book to comic stores. And Xena books are rallying, with her first appearance in Topps' *Hercules* #3 fetching a hefty $15.

GOING DOWN

"Star Wars" comics, including the popular *Crimson Empire II*, still sell, but have dropped to cover price or below. And Spider-Man books–even key issues like Spidey's first battle with Venom in *Amazing Spider-Man* (vol. 1) #300–are tangled in a web of disinterest. *Amazing* #300 is now $25.

ASSORTED CRAP REPORT

MERCH MADNESS

FRAME JOBS

Certain artists have huge followings among art collectors. Barry Windsor-Smith is one of these; witness the $600 shelled out for page 17 of *Conan the Barbarian* #2. Also, *Amazing Spider-Man* (vol. 1) #8, page 7, drawn by Steve Ditko, took in a whopping $1,276. And a George Perez-drawn *Crisis on Infinite Earths* #12, page 2 (and it's not even that great of a page) sold for $225.

KEEPING TIME

Yep, watches. Few pay attention to comic-related merchandise when released. But in time (Ha!), collectors start watching the DC merchandise,

NO JOKE!

WITCHBLADE WRITER CHRISTINA Z. HAS AN ARRANGEMENT WITH HER BANK WHERE SHE CAN CASH CHECKS UNDER THREE NAMES: "CHRISTINA Z.," "CHRISTINA ZEE" AND HER UNREVEALED TRUE NAME.

STRANGE BUT TRUE TALES FROM YOUR FAVORITE CREATORS...

MERCHcont.

watches in particular. A 1939 Superman watch took home $104, but proving the modern age rules, a 1992 "Death of Superman" watch beat it at $127. A "deathwatch" celebrating the character Death went for $50, but the recently released Sandman pocket watch trumped it at $102. And in the bargain zone? A Watchmen watch, complete with a bit of blood on the smiley face, was a cheap online auction buy at $42.

TIME MEANS MONEY Will this Plastic Man watch stretch your wallet?

DISPLAYS

Please don't take this as license to go out and raid your retailer, but his displays are often worth dough. An Oni Press Jay and Silent Bob store-hours window display recently took home $23 in an online auction, while a 1986 Batman: The Dark Knight Returns display was a bargain at $18. Hell, even a recent Coke display of the Hulk tearing up a roller coaster (to advertise Marvel's Island of Adventure theme park in Orlando, Fla.) went for $19.

GOOD AS GOLD

Assuming you're not picky about condition, you can make some real deals on Golden Age books. A copy of the Golden Age *Captain America Comics* #7 with back cover missing sold for $150. Hey, it may look like vulture vomit, but how many people can say they own a *Captain America* #7? And a copy of *Captain America Comics* #71 with no cover sold for $47. In the Golden Age, even crap can be golden.

MAKING SENSE OF IT ALL

HOW TO USE THE PRICE GUIDE

The **WIZARD** guide contains the most accurate and up-to-the-minute comic book prices possible. Keep in mind that the Price Guide is only a guide; prices may vary depending on the local availability and popularity of a title.

IT'S EASY... The price guide is arranged alphabetically by title. Listings for trade paperbacks, annuals, one-shots and graphic novels are found after the regular listing for a title, and are likewise listed alphabetically. When a title has been used several times for different series, like *Legion of Super-Heroes* or even *Fantastic Four*, we list all series under that title chronologically.

You'll notice some book listings have color bars. Red means it's risen in value; blue, fallen in value; green, new issues and/or title listings; and yellow indicates heavy market trading activity, yet no change in value since last issue.

ALPHABETICAL ARRANGEMENT

After skipping articles "A," "An," and "The" at the beginning of a title, alphabetization is word by word, not letter by letter. Ex: "The Amazing Spider-Man" is listed under "Amazing," but "Batman: Sword of Azrael" comes before "Batman: The Animated Movie" because we include the article "The" when it's an interior part of the title. All titles starting with the word "Star," including "Star Wars," come before titles such as "Stardust" and "Starman." Abbreviations such as "Dr." are listed before titles like "Dragon" but after titles starting with "Doctor." Numeric titles such as "2099 A.D." will be mixed in alphabetically as if the numeral were spelled out as "Two thousand ninety-nine."

REFERENCES

SECRET DECODER RING

- ❶ .....First Appearance of
- anniv.....Anniversary issue
- A .....Appearance
- B .....Begin stories with
- C .....Cameo that pre-dates ❶
- cvr.....Cover
- D .....Death/Destruction of
- GN.....Graphic Novel
- HC.....Hardcover
- IR .....Identity revealed
- J .....Joins
- L .....Last story with
- M.....Married
- O .....Origin
- p .....part #
- PF .....Prestige Format
- Q .....Quits
- R .....Return of
- SC.....Softcover
- sz .....Size
- TPB.....Trade Paperback
- w/.....With
- w/o.....Without

MAKING THE GRADE

All prices listed in this guide are for Near Mint (NM) condition. When your comic isn't Near Mint, you can compute the price based on the percentages shown below. Keep in mind that everyone grades condition differently and many things factor into grading a comic: age, supply and demand for the various grades, retailer location, local availability, current popularity, and its specific condition. It might help if you grade comics on a 10-point scale, with 10 being perfect and 1 being crappy.

MINT (M): An almost perfect 9.8 to 10 on a 10-point scale! To be Mint, a comic must appear like the day it was printed–no nicks, dings or creases. No tears or shreds on corners, colors are crystal clear, cover gloss is still there and the staples are perfect. Many new comics fall short of Mint standards. Mint comics fetch 125-150% of price listed. Comics after 1970 in Mint should be priced at the Near Mint price, since Mint copies are not unusual for comics after 1970.

NEAR MINT (NM): A 9 on a 10-point scale. The book might appear to be Mint, but upon inspection, tiny flaws are seen. The gloss and color are outstanding. **ALL PRICES IN THIS GUIDE ARE FOR NM COPIES, WHICH ARE 100 PERCENT OF GUIDE LISTINGS.**

VERY FINE (VF): A 7 on a scale of 10. At first glance may appear Near Mint, but at closer range, you'll notice minor signs of use. VF comics are 70 percent of guide listings (75-80% for pre-1970 books).

FINE-VERY FINE (FVF): A 6 outta 10. Pages may be slightly yellow, but not brown or brittle in FVF books. Expect several tiny stress lines along the spine or covers and several tiny color flakes are permitted. The spine may have creases and corners may be slightly rounded, but great cover gloss remains. FVF books go for 50 percent of price guide listings.

FINE (FN): A 5 out of 10. Slightly better than average with obvious signs of wear, but still clean and bright without major creasing. Fine books go for 40 percent of price guide listings.

VERY GOOD (VG): A 3 out of 10. Average, at best. VG comics appear used, but not abused. They have creases and minor tears. Very Good books go for 15-25 percent of guide listings.

GOOD (G), FAIR (FR) and POOR (P): All are 1 or less out of 10. These books...suck. Heavily worn, these are the comics that have been re-read a lot. Good books go for 10 percent of price guide listings. Fair books can have loose pages or pieces missing from the cover and sell for 3 percent of listings. Poor books can have missing covers, pages, etc. These books go for 1 percent of listings.

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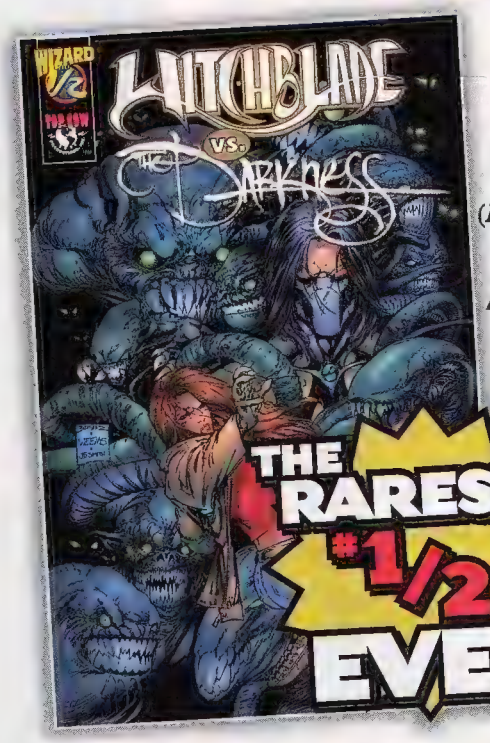
WITCHBLADE VS. DARKNESS #1/2



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C.B.I.Q.

YOU THINK YOU'RE SO SMART...

COMIC BOOK INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

Holy Michael J. Fox! With that whole millennium thing just around the corner, we're taking you back to the future for a very special futuristic edition of C.B.I.Q. This month, your comic book knowledge will be graded against the worst signs of the Apocalypse, now only about two months away! The more horrifying the sign, the higher your score.

SCORE	RANK
0	*Hillary Clinton: Senator of New York*
1-5	*Killer mosquitoes invade New York tri-state area, no Avengers in our reality to call*
6-12	*UPN still in business (still no Avengers in our reality to call)*
13	*Pamela Lee removes breast implants*

1 In his very first mini-series, what future version of a Marvel hero does Machine Man beat the hot snot out of?
- A) Jocasta
- B) Iron Man
- C) Himself
- D) H.E.R.B.I.E. (which, in the future, stands for "It's amazing that, after all these years, I still suck")

2 Which Bat villain has resurfaced in the future Gotham City of "Batman Beyond"?
- A) Mr. Freeze
- B) The Joker
- C) Ra's Al Ghul
- D) Joel Schumacher, wearing nothing but a bib

3 Guardians of the Galaxy member Yondu uses arrows made of what?
- A) Yaka
- B) Badoon crystal
- C) Adamantium
- D) Milk chocolate with a creamy nougat center

4 Out of all the loser Legion of Substitute Heroes members, who actually made it to full Legion status?
- A) Stone Boy
- B) Porcupine Pete
- C) Polar Boy
- D) That's-Not-A-Tick-I-Have-Crabs Lass

5 Yeah, okay, in the MC2 Universe, Wolverine's got a daughter named Wild Thing. But what's his son's name?
- A) Sabreclaw
- B) Claw Tooth
- C) Wild Child
- D) Billy

6 Who was *not* a member of Lex Luthor's Mankind Liberation Front in *Kingdom Come*?
- A) Catwoman
- B) Vandal Savage
- C) The Riddler
- D) The Wet Spot

7 How did Rick Jones die in *The Incredible Hulk: Future Imperfect*?
- A) BAM! Nailed by a ricochet bullet from a rebel soldier.
- B) SNIKT! Impaled on Wolverine's claws.
- C) BOOM! Sent back in time to the original Gamma Bomb explosion.
- D) SPLAT! Bad salmon.

8 The Joker killed the entire audience of what popular TV talk show in *The Dark Knight Returns*?
- A) "Tonight's Show with Johnny Carlson"
- B) "The David Endocrine Show"
- C) "The Arsenio Hale Show"
- D) "Mrs. Garrett's Black Talk"

9 In the classic "Days of Future Past" storyline, who was the last X-Man to get toasted?
- A) Storm
- B) Wolverine
- C) Colossus
- D) The Invincible Iron-Artie

10 Who were Kamandi's three friends?
- A) Mike, Billy and Shannon Sharpshooter
- B) Steve, Renzi and Ben Boxer
- C) Joe, Tartis and Frank Fighter
- D) Waitaminnit...isn't Kamandi "The Last Boy on Earth"? Unless that's what he named his hands, it just don't make no sense.

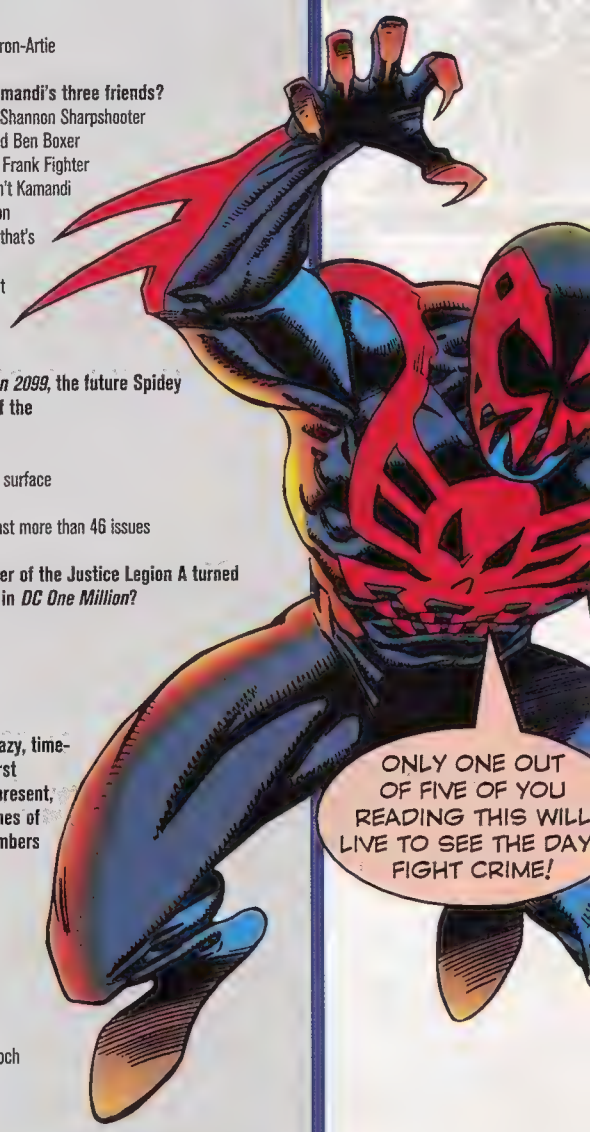
11 In *Spider-Man 2099*, the future Spidey possesses which of the following powers?
- A) Shooting webs
- B) Clinging to any surface
- C) Spider-Sense
- D) The ability to last more than 46 issues

12 Which member of the Justice Legion A turned rat-bastard traitor in *DC One Million*?
- A) Aquaman
- B) Hourman
- C) Starman
- D) Manman

13 When that crazy, time-traveling Bishop first showed up in the present, what were the names of his fellow XSE members who were killed very dead?
- A) Tyler and Shard
- B) Malcolm and Randall
- C) Fitzroy and Conner
- D) Turner and Hooch

ANSWERS

Candy-asses can peek on the next page if this is too tough...



BULLPEN LOOK BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Wizard goes Bi!

It's just the trendy thing to do: have an East AND West Coast office. And that's just what Wizard Entertainment's done now that Senior Staff Writer Jim McLauchlin has moved to L.A. to start our one-man West Coast Bullpen. "Now I sleep till noon (that's 3 p.m. Eastern), wander my apartment and eat corn chips in my underwear," says the soon-to-be-less-pasty McLauchlin. Meanwhile, the two newest *Wizard* recruits–Staff Writers Mike Cotton and Christopher Lawrence–have their hands full keeping pace with the 17th-hardest work staff in comics. "Jim keeps corn chips in his underwear?" Cotton asked, while Lawrence questioned the quasi-legendary McLauchlin's very existence. "Mike and I got here right after Jim 'moved,' so we never even met him. I say we check the L.A. *Times* to see if there're any sightings of a Bunny on skates chasing women in bikinis."

THE END IS NIGH Meet Jim McLauchlin, the fifth Horseman of the Apocalypse.

TOP 10 ways the Y2K bug will screw with things

10 Modok explodes in a burst of confetti and fun-size Milky Way bars.
9 Sentinels now seek only smooth, easy-drinking Coors Light.
8 Columbia House sends the Hulk a CD he didn't order.
7 The Batmobile refuses to go above 10 mph, won't stop playing that infernal ice-cream-man music.
6 Rom emits wet gurgle, head tilts back, out comes PEZ.
5 Cerebro stops picking up mutant brainwaves, instead searches out chicks with big yabos.
4 Daredevil's radar sense conks out, causing him to plummet off a skyscraper and land on El Aguila.
3 While reading the latest issue of *Swank*, Luke Cage gets sucked down an auto-flush toilet.
2 Ultron just sits there dispensing $20 bills.
1 Gareb Shamus starts publishing comic books.

C.B.I.Q. answers...

1. B	4. C	7. B	10. B	13. B
2. A	5. A	8. B	11. A	
3. A	6. D	9. C	12. C	

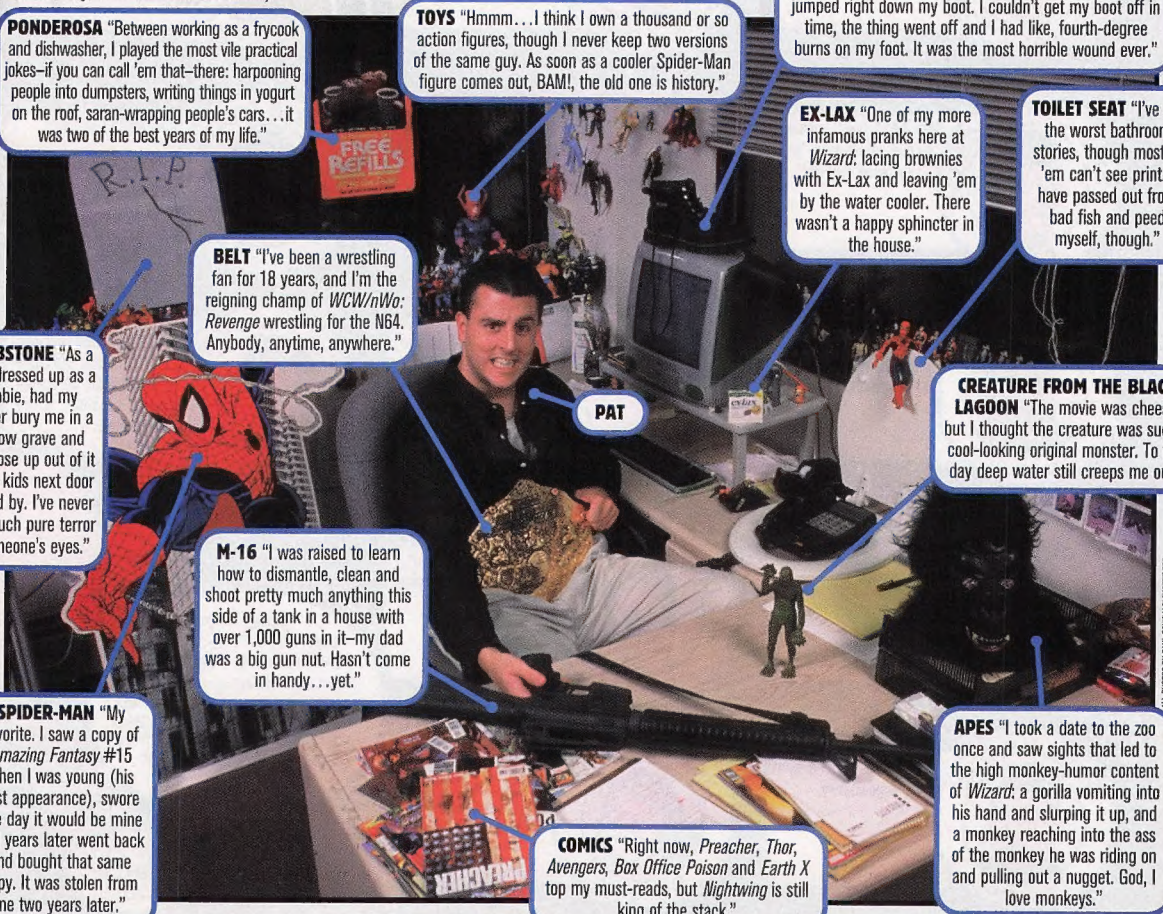
ONE OF THE DAMNED

Pat McCallum VICE PRESIDENT/EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

WHY WE PAY HIM "I'm sort of the idea man at *Wizard*. God, that sounds so f---ing pompous. I come up with ideas for all the magazines, hand them off, then come back and work on the finishing touches like word balloons, captions...that kind of stuff."

MOST BIZARRE *WIZARD* MOMENT "Coming back late from a movie premiere, I saw two naked people here in the *Wizard* parking lot. I'm not sure who they were, but they knew me because I heard them say my name before they ran into the woods."

BEST OUT-OF-CONTEXT QUOTE "My pants are still disappearing." (In reference to the fact that once, while Pat was moving, his clothes were boxed up, forcing him to wear shorts for three days in a row. A rare occurrence.)



PONDEROSA "Between working as a frycook and dishwasher, I played the most vile practical jokes–if you can call 'em that–there: harpooning people into dumpsters, writing things in yogurt on the roof, saran-wrapping people's cars...it was two of the best years of my life."

TOYS "Hmmm...I think I own a thousand or so action figures, though I never keep two versions of the same guy. As soon as a cooler Spider-Man figure comes out, BAM!, the old one is history."

BOOT "One time, I tied two jumping jack firecrackers together and lit them. I tossed it, and the damn thing jumped right down my boot. I couldn't get my boot off in time, the thing went off and I had like, fourth-degree burns on my foot. It was the most horrible wound ever."

EX-LAX "One of my more infamous pranks here at *Wizard*: lacing brownies with Ex-Lax and leaving 'em by the water cooler. There wasn't a happy sphincter in the house."

TOILET SEAT "I've got the worst bathroom stories, though most of 'em can't see print. I have passed out from bad fish and peed myself, though."

BELT "I've been a wrestling fan for 18 years, and I'm the reigning champ of *WCW/nWo: Revenge* wrestling for the N64. Anybody, anytime, anywhere."

OMBSTONE "As a l, I dressed up as a zombie, had my other bury me in a hallow grave and er rose up out of it the kids next door lked by. I've never en such pure terror someone's eyes."

CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON "The movie was cheesy, but I thought the creature was such a cool-looking original monster. To this day deep water still creeps me out."

M-16 "I was raised to learn how to dismantle, clean and shoot pretty much anything this side of a tank in a house with over 1,000 guns in it–my dad was a big gun nut. Hasn't come in handy...yet."

SPIDER-MAN "My favorite. I saw a copy of *Amazing Fantasy* #15 when I was young (his first appearance), swore one day it would be mine and years later went back and bought that same copy. It was stolen from me two years later."

COMICS "Right now, *Preacher*, *Thor*, *Avengers*, *Box Office Poison* and *Earth X* top my must-reads, but *Nightwing* is still king of the stack."

APES "I took a date to the zoo once and saw sights that led to the high monkey-humor content of *Wizard*: a gorilla vomiting into his hand and slurping it up, and a monkey reaching into the ass of the monkey he was riding on and pulling out a nugget. God, I love monkeys."

ALL PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHRADI EXCEPT FOR JIM'S HOT BODY © LANCE STAEDLER COURTESY OF OUTLINE.

The Big Last Page of DEATH

I, *THE WATCHER*, OVERSEER OF ALL *REALITY*, GIVE THE GIFT OF PRECOGNITION TO THE STAFF OF *WIZARD* MAGAZINE FOR PRODUCING THIS, THE *100th CONSECUTIVE* ISSUE OF *WIZARD* MAGAZINE! HERE, I TURN MY ALL-SEEING EYE TO THE *FUTURE* TO REVEAL HOW THE STAFF OF *WIZARD* SHALL MEET THEIR WELL-DESERVED *FATES*.

PAT McCALLUM
VP/Editor-in-Chief

HIS FATE Gets shoelace caught in escalator and is pulled down and ground into hamburger.

MATT SENREICH
Editorial Director

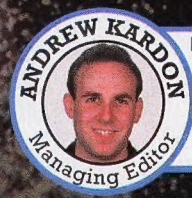
HIS FATE Just misses hitting the button that would have turned off the machine that blows up the world.

JOE YANARELLA
Senior Managing Editor

HIS FATE Incarcerated for taping a baseball game without the expressed written consent of Major League Baseball, dies alone.

BRIAN CUNNINGHAM
Editor

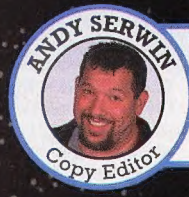
HIS FATE Giant, mutated fly pulls off his arms "just to see what happens."


ANDREW KARDON
Managing Editor

HIS FATE Chased off cliff by Muppets.

JUSTIN JONES
Associate Editor

HIS FATE Bad dates.


ANDY SERWIN
Copy Editor

HIS FATE May 5, 2006: Dies along with the rest of the planet.

JIM McLAUCHLIN
Senior Staff Writer

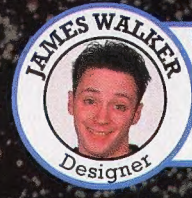
HIS FATE Antagonized drunk midget with a shiv who was a lot tougher than he looked.

STEVE BLACKWELL
Design Manager

HIS FATE Commandeered a 747, crashed into Super Bowl XXXVIII, left suicide note blaming it on video games.

ARLENE SO
Associate Art Director

HER FATE Sawed in half by false magician.


JAMES WALKER
Designer

HIS FATE Chokes after being forced to eat a plate of hair.

MIKE BENCIC
Designer

HIS FATE Staple-gun hijinks gone awry.

JACKIE BENCIC
Designer

HER FATE Driven into the ground like a tent stake by penny dropped off Empire State Building.

AND THAT WAS THAT. GO NOW, AND ENJOY YOUR NEW MILLENNIUM EVEN THOUGH THE NEW MILLENNIUM DOESN'T START UNTIL 2001. AND WHEN THAT BIG ASTEROID SHOWS UP IN 2006...AH, *FORGET I SAID ANYTHING.*
AND HEY, PEACE OUT!

ALL STAFF PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHIRALDI. TELLY SAMALAS PHOTOS BY GERARDO SONOZA/OUTLINE & BERNIE SAMPO/OUTLINE

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